

## An Early Canadian Orthoepist

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IN York, Upper Canada, now our city of Toronto, there appeared in 1833 a modest cloth-bound octavo volume of 104 pages, "A Manual of Orthœpy with Numerous Notes upon the Origin and Abuse of Words. Fourth Edition with large Additions and Corrections. York, (Upper Canada). Printed at the Office of the Guardian; Entered at Stationer's Hall, 1833".

The book was issued anonymously, but it is known to be the work of Henry Cook Todd, the father of the late Dr. Alpheus Todd, Librarian of Parliament and author of several valuable works on the Constitution.

The father was a graduate of Oxford and became master of a large private school. With a moderate competency, inherited and acquired, he retired into private life but like too many others, he invested his money in companies which failed. He then became a book-seller with little success, and finally his wife's brother\* persuaded him to emigrate to Canada. He made a tour in 1832 of the United States and Canada, an account of which he gave in a book, "Notes on Canada and the United States"; being satisfied with what he saw on this tour, he sent for his family who arrived at York in 1833. He was an accomplished amateur artist with the pencil; some of his drawings were much admired.

Fond of antiquarian reading and philological investigation, he would seclude himself for days at a time even from his own family.

He is described† as a most uncompromising Tory but of a kindly disposition; he would show the greatest kindness even to those he had most anathematized. He died in Toronto at the age of seventy-seven.

Of the *Orthœpy*, one edition appeared in London, England, in 1801 (Kingsford's Bibliography); the British Museum catalogue shows another in 1832; of the fourth edition, the Toronto Public Library and the Riddell Canadian Library have a copy each.

The paper for the book (as well as its printing and binding) was made in York, Upper Canada, as the author informs us in a note, adding "there is no tax in Canada upon paper, newspapers or advertisements"—he also says, "I have books printed on paper made not only of wood but of straw also".

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†By Samuel Thompson in his *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer*, Toronto, Hunter, Rose & Co., 1884, chapter XXVII, pp. 143-146. Most of the information concerning Todd is derived from this book.

There is a list of words with the proper pronunciation given along with improper pronunciations which are to be guarded against—at the foot of each page are notes of various kinds, orthographical, etymological, orthoepical, and some intended to convey useful or interesting information—these last often have little or no discoverable relation to the words to which they are appended.

The method of giving the correct pronunciation is much the same as Walker's—"dj" for the sound of "j"; "k" for the hard, and "s" for the soft sound of "c"; "kw" for "qu"; "ew" for long "u", etc. He adopts the Walkerian pronunciation of "tu", *i.e.*, "tshu"—*e.g.* "nature" he pronounces "na-tshure"; moreover, "verdure" is "verjure". He cannot distinguish final "al" from "el"; "natural" he pronounces "natsh-ur-el", "Needham", "Nede-em". Final "or" he always pronounces "ur", *e.g.*, "navigatur". A combination of what we would consider solecisms is found in "titular" which is pronounced "titsh-yew-lur", "tit-u-lur" being reprobated.

Final "ate" is "et", *e.g.*, "separate" is "sep-ur-et"; similarly "rhubarb" is "roo-burb"; "sirup" or "sirop" ("syrup" is not given) is "sur-rup"; "tacit" is "ta-sit", not "tas-it", why, it is hard to see—the original *tacitus*, *taceo*, have the "a" short.

"Mercy" is "mer-se", the first vowel as in "meadow"—"marcy" is vulgar but "murcy" is correct. One is at a loss to know where the author comes to rest between the Scots "maircy" and the Hibernian "murrey". "Honeycomb" is "hun-ne-koome" as in the days when "gold" was "goold" and "Rome", "room". Todd will not permit the latter, "as well might we say *ruman* and *hume* for *roman* and *home*". (It is not without interest to note that many of the family of the Homes call themselves Hume).

"Sewer", a drain, is "so-ur"; "obeisance" is "o-be-sanse". "Hearth", is "hurth" to rime with "earth"—as far from our common "harth" as from the Scottish "herrth".

"Onion" he pronounces "on-yun" and will not accept "un-yun"—the writer, Onion, is said to pronounce his name "On-i-on" with the accent on the penult, but every one has the right to pronounce his name as he wishes; Mr. Reach was not compelled to cease calling himself "Re-ach" by the humorist asking him to "re-ach me a pe-ach". "Peach" Todd pronounces "peesh", I presume by analogy with the French "pêche" but surely without warrant in usage or authority. It is easy to understand why a classical scholar would pronounce "chart" as "kart"—"Magna Carta" has, I hope, quite driven out "Magna Tcharta"; but it is not so easy to explain why he calls "pan-creas", "pan-krese" (κρέας) or "Idumea", "I-dew-me-a", with the accent on the antepenult (perhaps from Ἰδομενεΐς). "Tor-ka" is the old pronunciation

of "Torquay", now called "Tor-kee". "O-re-un" as Todd gives it, with the accent on the first syllable is intolerable—"O-ri-on" accents on the second; "lampblack" we are told has the "p" silent; the "l" must not be sounded in "fault"; this is "fawt", "fault" is vulgar. We know Pope and Swift rhymed "fault" with "thought" and Johnson in 1755 noted that the "l" was generally omitted in conversation. No one but a Scotsman now says "fawt"; but the Scot must grieve over "gollf" for his beloved "go'f", consoling himself for the time with the thought that it is not yet "golluf".

For one who used to chew "slippery-ellum-bark" and resented being forced to say "elm", the most curious of Todd's pronunciations are such as "lek-tew-ur", "lek-tew-ur-ship", "mew-er", "flou-ur", "mi-az-em", etc., for "lecture", "lectureship", "mure", "flour", "miasm", etc.—"nature" as we have seen is made dissyllabic, which increases the wonder that "lecture" is given three syllables. "Adagio" is given four syllables "a-dadg-e-o" notwithstanding that the "i" is here but a sign to soften the "g" and not a real letter. In the case of words from the French, Todd's practice is not uniform—he says "me-moir" and rejects "mem-war"; and "a-ma-tew-ur", rejecting "am-a-tur"—his pronunciation of "amateur" is still in vogue with those who finish a dinner with a "lick-kew-ur" having begun it with a "hor-dover". "Presentiment" he pronounced "pre-san-te-mong" with the accent on the antepenult: "bourgeois" was "burdg-wau" (except, of course, in printing when it is "bur-jois").

Many of the pronunciations called corrupt or vulgar by Todd are now accepted: we say "a-gen", "bin", "caviare", "extrordinary", "laundry" "palfrey", etc., where he would say "a-gain", "been" (rhyming with "seen") "kaveer" "extra-ordinary", "lan-dre", "paul-fre", etc. With the exception of "ka-veer" all these are still allowed. The present pronunciation of the first, second, and third, I had driven into my unwilling head more than half a century ago at the same time the first "d" was silenced in "Wednesday". Use has made them familiar and tolerable, but I am still resentful and unconvinced; however, *usus norma loquendi*. I am reconciled to "venzn" for "venison"—Todd gives "ven-ne-zun" and will have nothing to do with "ven-zun"; we go one better and make a monosyllable out of his trisyllable. Why he says "un-veel" for "unveil", "ung-tshus" for "unctuous", and "E-pra" for "Ypres" is a mystery—the last has had a recrudescence in these days with those who speak of the "Vo-zhay" mountains. For the old pronunciation of "tea", *i.e.*, "tay", he cites Pope's

"Tell, tell your grief; attentive will I stay

Though time is precious and I want some tea."



He does not give the poet's better known lines—

"Here, thou, Great Anna! whom three realms obey,  
Dost sometimes counsel take, and sometimes tea".

All of us but the clergy, whom it specially concerns, have difficulty in saying "Sim-ony" as we should; remembering Si-mon Magus, we are apt to say "Si-mony". Don't.

By comparing the accent in this book and that in present use, the recessive tendency of English accent is observable—"placard", "finance", "festive", etc., are now generally accented on the first syllable ("festive" always) but in Todd's time that was not allowed—at least by Todd. He said "en-ve-lope", accenting the last syllable, we "anv-lop", accenting the first; he pronounced "abdlicative" with the accent on the antepenult, we accent the first syllable. Old-fashioned people still speak of the orchestra as Byron did, with the second syllable stressed, not the first; but it would be hard to find one who accented "remediless" in the same way.

It is more difficult to account for the pronunciation of "academy" by Todd; he accents the first syllable though he must have known the original "ἀκαδημία"; "reverie", with the ultimate accented may be accounted for by its French origin—also "travail", "trav-ale", with the final accent.

The Orthoepist has little patience with those who do not agree with him—they are the mob, the canaille, the vulgar, the low Cockneys, lispers, and letter clippers—when mechanics called "solder", "sodder", instead of "sol-der", they should remember that "workmen ought to accept their pronunciation from scholars and not scholars from workmen"; and he refused to allow his pronunciation to be directed by that of a parish clerk.

He is "down" on the "pure English vulgarism" of the "addenda of 'don't I' in 'I always do, don't I?'" He does not like "'by the bye', a phrase originally introduced from Scotland"; and "dissenting clergyman" for "dissenting minister" is wrong—the old form "he's gone dead", he says, is now disused (Todd did not mix with the coloured brethren, evidently). We should not say "no more do I" but "nor do I", for "unless finishing a sentence, *more* always requires *than* after it" (the *more* I think of this, the *less* I am inclined to agree).

A very curious feature is the derivations given, some of them now approved, but many whimsical "folk-etymology". "Cockney" he derives from the Londoner who in the country heard the cock "neigh"—this is like the boy from "The Ward" who was amused to hear the lambs "bark", and probably equally apocryphal. But anyone is at liberty to accept this etymology instead of the fantastic "cockenay" (cock's egg) which seems to be now the favourite.

“Attorney” he derives from the sheriff’s “torn” (tourn) or court, which is distinctly better than the bad guess of our old law books deriving the word from “turn”, the attorney taking the “turn” of another. Of course, it is the old French “atorné” or “atourné”, “one constituted or appointed”, as in a “power of attorney” to this day.

“Bumper”, Todd says, is so called because it was customary to drink out of a full glass to the Pope (in French *au bon Père*, corrupted to “bumper”)—he clearly had not in mind the distinction between a “brimming” glass and a “bumper” and perhaps had never noticed the “bump” or “hump” on a glass over-full. By the way have classical scholars yet agreed on the meaning of “vina coronant” (Verg. Aen. I, 724)? and does it differ from “magnum cratera corona induit” (Verg. Aen. III, 525)? and how? But he knew much about drink, drinkers and drinking; he says: “toasts are drank, but the men drunk”, that Madeira (which he calls “ma-deer-ah”) produces 10,000 pipes of wine yearly but exports 40,000, that a French wine merchant said “Give me six hours’ notice of what wine you like, and you shall have it out of those two casks”, that it is wrong to say that a man is “in liquor” when it is plain the liquor is in him, that a *drink* for a *draught* of beer is vulgar, that “Cornish” is a Devonshire term for a pipe or a glass among many people (he prefers “among” with the human race, “amongst” with other objects), that “goblet” is properly a glass “without a foot that its contents may be cleared at a draught”, that “entire” was first made by one Harwood who mixed ale, beer and two-penny, that brewers in London use sulphuric acid “to give new beer the flavour of old” and that “the tipplers of Braintree and Brocking, Essex, divide a tankard of ale into three draughts which they call by the names of *neckum*, *sinkum*, and *swankum*.”

“News” is given the popular derivation, N, E, W, S, the four quarters of the compass.

“Pamphlet” is another instance of folk etymology—it is derived from “par un filet” fastened by a thread, instead of Pamphilus—take your choice.

The odd word “haberdasher” is said to have arisen from a nickname given to the German Jews because of their offering their small wares with “hab er dass, herr?”: “buy you this, Sir?” *Credat Judaeus Appella*. This is, however, no more whimsical than the derivation of the Italian “brindisi”, “a toast”, which I was taught came from the German students prefacing the toast by “Ich bring dir’s”, “I bring you it”, (equivalent to our Canadian vernacular “I looks *towards* you”). This derivation is given by the lexicographers—I find it, e.g., in Petrocchi’s excellent *Novo Dizionario Scolastico*. It is not probable that anything German will be adopted in Italy for some time after this—the Italians will not readily accept what the Germans bring:

"Culprit" is derived from "qu'il paroit" instead of from "cul" (contraction of culpabilis) and "prit" (or "prist" for "prest," old French, "ready").

"Courtier is of French origin meaning simply a broker or dealer in *old clothes*". Those interested in the French word will find in Littré's monumental work a description of the five kinds of courtier—our word is, of course, from "curia", "cours", "court". It is not unlikely that Todd was here facetious as when he said "Holy, pious. Some interpret it differently" adding the note, "As Aylmer, bishop of London, 1560, who on Sundays *played bowls* in his palace".

"Rum un" which seems to defy our modern etymologists, Todd says, "originated with J. Bell, schoolmaster, Minchinhampton, who, exercising a dull scholar on the word, *milk*, asked, for elucidation, what his mother put into her tea, to which he replied with naiveté, *rum*": and he adds that it originally meant "rum in tea, now an odd person".

Whether "hank" is derived from John Hanks, a celebrated Brabant manufacturer, or "humbug" from Hamburg, or "peddler" from "petty-dealer" everyone must decide for himself. The last looks too much like the celebrated derivation of "hostler" or "ostler" from "oat-stealer" to receive ready credence, the first looks too easy, but the second has much vraisemblance in these days.

To a number of words the author gives an orthography which is at least odd. In some cases there is a clear misprint, "vowasom" for "vavasour", "*a fortioro*" for "*a fortiori*", "audi alterim partem" for "alteram", *volo mea vita*, etc. But there are cases in which this is not so—"gass" for "gas" (the form given the word by Van Helmont, its inventor); "gimblot" for "gimblet" or "gimlet", "choaking" for "choking" (but this was not uncommon in Todd's time and even later, just as "smoak" was found instead of "smoke". By the way he says that women near Manchester are notorious for smoking and that "Ladies of high rank in Russia smoke segars as fishwomen do here"—*tempora mutantur*). He properly distinguishes between "birth" and "berth", though the latter word was spelled "birth" by Todd in his *Notes on Canada and the United States*, by Gourlay and others of about the same time.

I cannot account for the translation of the Horatian *odi profanum*: "I hate profanity"—the *profanum vulgus* of Horace were simply the common herd, outside the fane or temple, not necessarily given to swearing or clothing themselves with cursing like as with their garments.

But one may safely say that Todd's version of these words of Horace is distinctly better than the schoolboy's translation of those other famous words of Horace: *Post equitem sedet atra Cura*. "After horse exercise the black lady sits down with care". Before this effort the



translation of Vergil's *Arma virumque cano*, "Arm the man with a cane" must pale its uneffectual fire.

Quite the most interesting part of the very interesting volume is the mass of curious information given in the notes at the foot of the pages—I cannot vouch for the accuracy of all of it, however.

"Eating animal food arose from a Phoenician priest ascertaining by accident the flavour of a burnt offering". This is too much like Charles Lamb's story of the origin of roast pork to command ready acceptance, even if the 9th Chapter of Genesis is to be disregarded. "Baptism originated with the deluge because the world was purged by water"—that I leave to McMaster University.

"The French having no word for 'good-nature' are charged with the want of it". By whom? And what is wrong with "bonhomie"?

It is wrong to say "ivory" for "Highbury Barn" (near Islington).

Be careful at the butcher's—"Horse's tongue is often sold for a bullock's; but this is rough, and that is smooth". While as to "lamb's tongue"—it "in buying requires care, as some vendors substitute that of a dog".

"Isabella colour—from a Spanish princess by name Isabella who vowed not to change her linen until Ostend was taken by her troops. It held out a long time, when her subjects, unwilling to call her linen *dirty*, named it *isabella colour*".

"Anciently when executed in France, a Jew was hung between two dead dogs. In Germany, he is allowed to marry *thirteen* times and no more". A gentleman in America wrote "Jacob" without one of its proper letters, "Gegup"—this is equal to "kawphy" for "coffee", and to the Irish magistrate's feat during the Commonwealth of spelling "usage", "yow-zitch" averring when rebuked that nobody could possibly spell with pens made from the quills of Irish geese.

"At Judges' Chambers in Ireland, knockers are for Barristers and bells for Solicitors. In Scotland these only are genteel while those are vulgar. The former in England are set apart for mistresses and the latter, their maids".

"In Ireland 'Good *dry* lodgings' means lodgings without board."

"All my eye and Betty Martin" is "a whimsical corruption of a prayer to a saint in the Romish missal beginning 'O mihi beate Martine'" —notwithstanding that in the proper ecclesiastical pronunciation, "mihi" is not "my-hy".

"The whole library of one isle (Scilly), 1720, consisted of the bible and Dr. Faustus"—not a bad library, either, be it said.

A Soph (University undergraduate) is "A leveller of Truth at the shrine of Folly"—second-year men will please take notice.

"A hearty supper may be called the many-headed monster of disease"—and this from an Englishman!

"In Canada I have seen one of the hairs from a horse's tail put into water become in a week a *living animal*". So have I—a plague on science which proves that I didn't.

"Toothache is instantly relieved if not cured by the application of nitric acid"—like the tooth paste Mark Twain speaks of which took off the tartar, indeed, but took the enamel off with it.

"We put the fork on the left of the plate, a German in it, a Frenchman uses it alone and a Russian as a tooth-pick"—I have seen a man scratch his head with it.

"When part of a fish, the *i* (in gill) is then pronounced hard as in *hill*"—this is too much for me, I cannot interpret it.

"Glutton—as Albinus, an ancient British Emperor, who sometimes ate 500 figs, 100 peaches, 20 lbs. of dry raisins, 10 melons and 400 oysters for breakfast"—let Gargantua look out for his laurels.

I extract just one more of the numerous plums in this delectable book, and leave it with regret,—"Tiny (small) formerly confined within the boundaries of the burgeois, though it now ranges amongst the politest circles. The same may be said of *fat* which was as closely pent up in our various markets, but now associates with the best company".

Ave et vale, Henry Cook Todd, antiquarian and scholar!

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