

INTRODUCTION.

Sheridan, 1784.	Walker, 1794.	Jones, 1798.	Perry, 1805.	Jameson, 1827.
Titshular,	Titshular,	Titshular,	Titular,	Titular.
Tortshur.	Tortshure,	Tortshure,	Torture,	Tortyr.
Tortshuou,	Tortshuou,	Tortshuou,	Tortuous,	Tortuous.
Trishuration,	Trishuration,	Trishuration,	Triturate,	Trituration.
Tshoumitshuou,	Tumultshuou,	Tumultshuou,	Tumultuous,	Tumultuous.
Uagshuou,	Ungktshuou,	Ungktshuou,	Unetuous,	Ungktuous.
Unstatshutable,	Unstatshutable,	Unstatshutable,	Unstatutable,	
Vestshur,	Vestshure,	Vestshure,	Vesture,	Vestyr.
Ventshur,	Ventshure,	Ventshure,	Venture,	Ventyr.
Veolentshelo,	Veolentshelo,	Veolentshelo,	Violoncello,	Veolontello.
Vertshu,	Vertshu,	Vertshu,	Virtue,	Virtu.
Vitshuline,	Vitshuline,	Vitshuline,	Vituline,	
Voluptshuou,	Voluptshuou,	Voluptshuou,	Voluptuous,	Voluptuous.
Vultshur,	Vultshure,	Vultshure,	Vulture,	Vultyur.
Waishur,	Waishure,	Waishure,	Waifure,	

This table of words may perhaps be thought a burlesque on English orthography. It certainly presents a phenomenon altogether novel in the history of language.

Of these five authorities, the notation of Perry, with the exception of a few words ending in *ure*, is most nearly accordant to the present usage in England, as far as my observations, while in that country, extended. That of Walker is by far the most remote from that usage. From an actual enumeration of the syllables in certain classes of words in which the vowel is erroneously pronounced, in Walker's scheme, I have ascertained that the number amounts to more than *twelve thousand*, without including several classes of unaccented syllables, which would swell the number by some thousands. Of this whole number, I did not, while in England, hear one vowel pronounced according to Walker's notation. The zeal manifested in this country, to make his pronunciation a standard, is absolute infatuation, as if adopted in its full extent, it would introduce many differences in the pronunciation of words in the two countries, where sameness now exists; and even the attempt, should it not be successful, must multiply discordances and distract opinions, and thus place the desired uniformity at a greater distance than ever. Fortunately, Walker's pronunciation has never been generally received in England, and where it has been received, we see, by Jameson's Dictionary, that it is becoming unpopular and obsolete.

We observe in the following list, that the three first of these orthoepists have no rule by which their pronunciation is regulated. Hence the want of uniformity in words of like orthography. See *bounteous*, *courteous*, *dutious*, and *plenteous*. Why should *plenteous* be reduced to two syllables, when *bounteous* is pronounced in three? And what reason can be assigned for the different notation of *capitulate* and *recapitulate*?

A remarkable instance of inconsistency in Walker's notation occurs in words of more syllables than two, ending in *ture*. Thus we find *ture* converted into *chure* [shure] in

Abbreviatshure.	Celastshure.	Contextshure
Admixtshure.	Calentshure.	Debenshure.
Adventshure.	Compactshure.	Decoetshure.
Agricultshure.	Compostshure.	Defectshure.
Apertshure.	Concretshure.	Dejectshure.
Attainshure.	Conjectshure.	Departshure.
Aventshure.	Conjunctshure.	Dicatshure.
Imposhture.	Overtshure.	Divestshure.
Indenshure.		Projectshure.

But in the following words the terminating syllable remains unaltered.

Literature.	Literature.	Prelature.
Intemperature.	Miniature.	Quadrature.
Investiture.	Nunciature.	Serrature.
Judicature.	Nutriture.	Signature.
Ligature.	Prefecture.	Temperature.
Linnature.		

In this class of words, Sheridan and Jones are also inconsistent with themselves, though not to the same extent as Walker. Perry and Jameson retain, in all these words, the true orthography and pronunciation. In these words also, Walker gives to *u*, in the last syllable, its first or long sound; but this is an inaccurate notation; the sound, in actual usage, is that of short *u*, at least so far as my observation extends, either in England or the United States.

In the following classes of words, as pronounced by Walker, there is either error or inconsistency, or both.

Assiojous.	Individual or individual,
Connojeous or connojeous,	Ingrejant [for ingredient,]
Credjulous.	Inilicious or inilicious,
Dividul or dividul,	Intermedial or intermejal,
Fastidious or fastidjeous,	Invidious or invidjeus,
Gradient or grajent,	Mediocrity or mejoecrity,
Gradul or gradjul,	Medium or mejeum,
Guardian or guarjean,	Melodious or melojous,
Hileus or hidjeus,	Meridian or meridjean,
Immediacy or innejeasy,	Modulate or modjuliate,
Incendary or incenjaery,	Nidjulation,

Nodjule,	Preljeus,
Noctidyal or noctidjeal,	Presidjeal,
Obejeence,	Procejure,
Obejeent,	Quotjean,
Obduracy or objuracy,	Radiate or rajente,
Obduracy or objurate,	Radiant or rajenant,
Oceidjeus,	Radius or rajies,
Odium or ojeum,	Rezdijal,
Ojus or ojeus,	Sardius or sarjeus,
Ordeal or orjeal,	Sedulous or sedjulous,
Penjulus,	Stiduous or stjeus,
Penjulum,	Tedious or tejeus,
Predial or prejeal,	

It would seem that, in a large part of these words, we may take our choice, either to retain the proper sound of *d*, or to convert it into that of *j*. This choice certainly makes an odd kind of standard. But why *mediate* should retain the sound of *d*, while *immediacy* and *medium* suffer a change; or why *radiate* should be given in the alternative, *radiate* or *rajate*, while *irradiate* and *irradiance* are not subjected to any change; or why *obediency* should be changed into *obejeence*, and *disobediency* remain unchanged, I am not able to conjecture.

These classes of words exhibit a specimen of the modern ORTHOPEPY, so called, of our language; it is indeed a brief and imperfect specimen, for I have ascertained by actual enumeration, that a catalogue of *all* the differences of notation in these authors, would comprehend about *one third* of all the words in their vocabularies. Amidst this mass of errors and contradictions, our consolation is that the good sense of the English nation, a learned and respectable people, is triumphing over the follies and caprices of fashion, and frowning on this most mischievous spirit of innovation.

In proportion as the importance of settled usages and of preserving inviolate the proper sounds of letters, as the true and only safe landmarks of pronunciation, shall be appreciated by an enlightened people, just in that proportion will all attempts of affected speakers to innovate upon such established usages be reprobated and resisted.

The intentions of the men who have undertaken to give a standard of pronunciation, have unquestionably been upright and sincere; but facts have proved that instead of *good* they have, on the whole, done *harm*; for instead of reducing the pronunciation of words to uniformity, they have, to a considerable extent, unsettled it, and multiplied differences. The whole process of these attempts, from Sheridan's first publication, is within my memory, and I am confident, that whatever has been the effect of these attempts in Great Britain, the result of them in the United States, has been to multiply greatly the diversities of pronunciation. And such is the present state of the authorities, offered as standards, that it is impossible from books to gain a correct knowledge of what is the general usage. If I had no other means of knowing this general usage, than the English books, I should be utterly unable to ascertain it and should give up the attempt as hopeless.*

Some of the differences of notation, in the several books, may be rather *apparent* than *real*; but with all due allowance for this imperfection of the schemes, I am persuaded that there are *ten* differences among these orthoepists, where there is *one* in the actual pronunciation of respectable people in England and the United States; and in most of them, the notation, if strictly followed, will lead to *ten* differences of pronunciation, where *one* only now exists in the actual practice of the two countries.

This effect of multiplying doubts and diversities, has resulted from very obvious causes.

1. The limited acquaintance of orthoepists with the general usage, and

* The multiplicity of books for instructing us in our vernacular language is an evil of no small magnitude. Every man has some peculiar notions which he wishes to propagate, and there is scarcely any peculiarity or absurdity for which some authority may not be found. The facility of book-making favors this disposition, and while a chief qualification for authorship is a dextrous use of an inverted pen, and a pair of scissors, we are not to expect relief from the evil.