

## CANADIAN LANGUAGE PUZZLES THE ENGLISH

Englishwoman Asks for a Reel of Cotton  
and Is Shown Calico, But She  
Wants a Spool of Thread.

AND THE ASSISTANT WHO  
SERVES HER IS A "CLERK"

Many Ordinary Things are Known by  
Different Terms to the Old Coun-  
tryman and the Canadian.

By PERCIVAL B. WALMSLEY.

"A T the present day, there is a perceptible difference, not only of pronunciation, but of diction, between the English of the educated classes in America and the English of the corresponding classes in England. Correct London English and correct American English have so far diverged as to run parallel courses."

So says Hart's Rhetoric. On the other hand, the language of the educated people in Canada and in the United States is so much alike that one might call it North American English.

It is this very perceptible difference, especially of diction, which causes much difficulty to English people coming to Canada whether as workers or visitors. An Englishman going to France expects to find there a different language, and may prepare himself with grammar and dictionary, but he will hardly think of the different vocabulary required for this part of the British Empire.

Baedeker indeed has recognized the need and has given the tourist a glimpse into the different phrases incidental to railway travel, but he did not go far. The Englishman is surprised to find no guards here, but conductors, and that luggage is baggage, and the smaller bags are termed grips. They are railroads rather than railways, and the rails are laid on ties, not sleepers. In fact, the terminology of railway management is almost entirely different. Trucks become freight cars, goods trains are freight trains. Nothing is sent "carriage-paid," but freight prepaid. Carriers are express companies, and so on.

The visitor may go shopping, but it will be in a store. He should not ask for a draper's, an ironmonger's, or a sweet shop. He will see these represented, but they are named drygoods, hardware and candy stores respectively. Those who assist the proprietors of these stores are not assistants but clerks, however slight may be their clerical duties. The bank clerk retains his name, but the bank cashier becomes the teller, as in Scotland.

The articles sold also go by different names. An Englishwoman's first experience in a drygoods store is generally comical. She asks for a reel of cotton, and the clerk has been known to offer to cut off a few yards of what she would call calico. She finds out she should have requested a spool of thread. Cotton-wool or wadding, she must call cotton-batting.

### Here Lunch Isn't a Time of Day

THE blouse she fancies may be styled a blouse, and then again it may be a waist, which she formerly regarded as a part of her anatomy only, and not a species of garment. If she neglected to bring her galoshes with her, a pair of rubbers will serve the same purpose.

The lift is of course the elevator, the tramcar the street car, the pavement is the sidewalk. In the restaurants the visitor wanting biscuits must ask for crackers, while if he mentions biscuits he will get something a little richer than a bread roll, and certainly not twice-cooked. After the meat course he should inquire for the dessert not the sweets. If, during an evening with friends, his hostess asks him to stay for lunch, this does not mean till noon the next day, as a lunch may be served at any time.

How should one spell "cheque"? The newspapers print it "check"; the Royal Bank follows the English fashion, while the Dominion is impartial with "check" on counterfoils and "cheque" for its credit slips. "Gotten" for "got" will look wrong to the Englishman, but is authorized by English dictionaries, while "proven," an irregular form, will remind him of a Scottish verdict. "Dove" for "dived" he may think is boyish slang, but it is just colloquial and used by the newspapers. Here wills are probated; in England they are proved and probate is obtained. Real estate, a household phrase here, is not used in England, and is not even given in Roget's Thesaurus. There is property, the "propuppy, propuppy" of Tennyson's poem, and real property or realty, as a legal term.

Corn is restricted to maize, and is not the general term for various grains as it is in England. A rough character is not a rough but a tough, and if he uses a pistol or revolver unlawfully he is a gun-man, as the once local Western U. S. use of the word gun in this sense has spread over all North America. Petrol becomes gasoline. Coal oil seems to be the same thing as paraffin over the water. The chores of Shakespeare's time are the chores of North America, while England's legacy from the word is charwoman. The elementary or board schools of England are the public schools of Canada.

Changes are constantly going on in the language of the English-speaking peoples. A different set of the old words are retained in each country, and new ideas and contrivances are given different names. Subtle changes of meaning of the same word also take place. The great desideratum is that none should speak slightingly of the phraseology or the pronunciation of the others. Those most critical are often the least correct.