



# English As She Wuz Wrote

Curious ways in which the English  
Language may be made to convey  
Ideas or obscure them.

By Anonymous

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# C O N T E N T S

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## P R E F A C E

"Anybody," said an astute lawyer, addressing the jury to whom the opposing counsel had reflected upon inaccuracies in the spelling of his brief--"anybody can write English correctly, but surely a man may be allowed to spell a word in two or three different ways if he likes!" This was a claim for independence of action which so commended itself to the jury that it won a verdict for his client. The same plea may be considered in regard to the truly wonderful way in which the mother-tongue is often written, by the educated sometimes as well as by the uneducated.

A man, it may be urged, has a right to spell as he chooses, and to express his ideas, when he has any, as best he can; while, when he suffers from a dearth of those rare articles, he has still more reason to rejoice in liberty of choice in respect to the language he selects to cover his poverty of thought. Hence there are doubtless good and sufficient reasons for every specimen of "English as she is wrote," which it is the object of this little book to rescue from oblivion, and which have, one and all, been written with the sober conviction, upon the part of the writers, that they accurately conveyed the meaning they desired. Intentionally humorous efforts have been carefully excluded, and the interest of the collection consists in the spontaneity of expression and in the fact that it offers fair samples of the possibilities which lie hidden in the orthography and construction of our language. Let it be remembered, then, that anybody can write English as she "should be wrote," and hence that a certain meed of admiration is due to those who, exercising their right of independent action, succeed in making it at once original and racy, and in conveying, without the least effort, meanings totally opposed to their intention, affording thereby admirable examples of English as "she is wrote" by thousands.



## ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE...

### I. By the Inaccurate.

In the account of an inaugural ceremony it was asserted that "the procession was very fine, and nearly two miles long, as was also the report of Dr. Perry, the chaplain."

A Western paper says: "A child was run over by a wagon three years old, and cross-eyed, with pantalets on, which never spoke afterward."

Here is some descriptive evidence of personal peculiarities:

"A fellow was arrested with short hair."

"I saw a man digging a well with a Roman nose."

"A house was built by a mason of brown stone."

"Wanted--A room by two gentlemen thirty feet long and twenty feet wide."

"A man from Africa called to pay his compliments tall and dark-complexioned."

"I perceived that it had been scoured with half an eye."

A sea-captain once asserted that his "vessel was beautifully painted with a tall mast."

In an account of travels we are assured that "a pearl was found by a sailor in a shell."

A bill presented to a farmer ran thus: "To hanging two barn doors and myself, 4 s. 6 d. "

A store-keeper assures his customers that "the longest time and easiest terms are given by any other house in the city."

Here is a curious evidence of philanthropy: "A wealthy gentleman will adopt a little boy with a small family."

A parochial report states that "the town farm-house and almshouse have been carried on the past year to our reasonable satisfaction, especially the almshouse, at which there have been an unusual amount of sickness and three deaths."

A Kansas paper thus ends a marriage notice: "The couple left for the East on the night train where they will reside."

In the account of a shipwreck we find the following: "The captain swam ashore. So did the chambermaid; she was insured for a large sum and loaded with pig-iron."

A notice at the entrance to a bridge asserts that "any person driving over this bridge in a faster pace than a walk shall, if a white person be fined five dollars, and if a negro receive twenty-five lashes, half the penalty to be bestowed on the informer."

The following notice appeared on the west end of a country meeting-house: "Anybody sticking bills against this church will be prosecuted according to law or any other nuisance."

A gushing but ungrammatical editor says: "We have received a basket of fine grapes from our friend ----, for which he will please accept our compliments, some of which are nearly one inch in diameter."

On the panel under the letter-receiver of the General Post-Office, Dublin, these words are printed: "Post here letters too late for the

next mail."

An Ohio farmer is said to have the following warning posted conspicuously on his premises: "If any man's or woman's cows or oxen gits in this here oats his or her tail will be cut off, as the case may be."

A lady desired to communicate by electricity to her husband in the city the size of an illuminated text which she had promised for the Sunday-school room. When the order reached him it read, "Unto us a child is born, nine feet long by two feet wide."

A farmer who wished to enter some of his live-stock at an agricultural exhibition, in the innocence of his heart, but with more truth in his words than he dreamed of, wrote to the committee, saying, "Enter me for one jackass."

An Irishman complained to his physician that "he stuffed him so much with drugs that he was ill a long time after he got well."

A correspondent of a New York paper described Mr. C.'s journey to Washington to attend "the dying bedside of his mother."

A dealer in engravings announced: "'Scotland Forever.' A Cavalry Charge after Elizabeth Thompson Butler, just published."

A Western paper says that "a fine new school-house has just been finished in that town capable of accommodating three hundred students four stories high."

A coroner's verdict read thus: "The deceased came to his death by excessive drinking, producing apoplexy in the minds of the jury."

An old edition of Morse's geography declares that "Albany has four hundred dwelling-houses and twenty-four hundred inhabitants, all standing with their gable-ends to the street."

A member of a school committee writes, "We have two school-rooms sufficiently large to accommodate three hundred pupils, one above the other."



A Harrisburg paper, answering a correspondent on a question of etiquette, says: "When a gentleman and lady are walking upon the street, the lady should walk inside of the gentleman."

A clergyman writes, "A young woman died in my neighborhood yesterday, while I was preaching the gospel in a beastly state of intoxication."

A certain friendly society, which was also a sort of mutual insurance organization, had this among its printed notices to the members: "In the event of your death, you are requested to bring your book, policy, and certificate at once to Mr. ----, when your claims will have immediate attention."

A New York paper, describing a funeral in Jersey City, says: "At the ferry four friends of the deceased took possession of the carriage and followed the remains to Evergreen Cemetery, where they were quietly interred in a new lot without service or ceremony." The devotion of the friends of the deceased was certainly remarkable, but one can not help wondering what became of the remains.

A newspaper gives an account of a man who "was driving an old ox when he became angry and kicked him, hitting his jawbone with such force as to break his leg." "We have been fairly wild ever since we read the paper," writes a contemporary, "to know who or which got angry at whom or what, and if the ox kicked the man's jaw with such force as to break the ox's leg, or how it is. Or did the man kick the ox in the jawbone with such force as to break the ox's leg, and, if so, which leg? It's one of those things which no man can find out, save only the man who kicked or was being kicked, as the case may be."

One of Sir Boyle Roche's invitations to an Irish nobleman was rather equivocal. He wrote, "I hope, my lord, if you ever come within a mile of

my house you will stay there all night."

A German tourist expresses himself in regard to his Scottish experiences as follows: "A person angry says to-day that he was from the theatre gallery spit upon. Very fine. I also was spit upon. Not on the dress but into the eye strait it came with strong force while I look up angry to the gallery. Befor I come to your country I worship the Scotland of my books, my 'Waverly Novel,' you know, but now I dwell here since six months, in all parts, the picture change. I now know of the bad smell, the oath and curse of God's name, the whisky drink and the rudeness. You have much money here, but you want what money can not buye--heart cultivating that makes respect for gentle things. O! to be spit in the eye in one half million of peopled town. Let me no longer be in this cold country, where people push in the street, blow the noze with naked finger, empty the dish at the house door, chooze the clergy from the lower classes and then go with them to death for an ecclesiastical theory which none of them can understand. I go home three days time." There is more in this than grotesque English, however. It abounds with good sense and penetration.

The following is a pattern piece of modern style, sanctioned by an English Board of Trade, and drawn up by an eminent authority: "Tickets are nipped at the Barriers, and passengers admitted to the platforms will have to be delivered up to the Company in event of the holders subsequently retiring from the platforms without travelling, and cannot be recognized for readmission."

A college professor, describing the effect of the wind in some Western forests, wrote, "In traveling along the road, I even sometimes found the logs bound and twisted together to such an extent that a mule couldn't climb over them, so I went round."

A mayor in a university town issued the following proclamation: "Whereas a Multiplicity of Dangers are often incurred by Damage of outrageous Accidents by Fire, we whose names are undesigned have thought proper that the Benefit of an Engine bought by us for the better extinguishing of which by the Accidents of Almighty God may unto us happen to make a Rate together Benevolence for the better propagating such useful Instruments."



## ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE... II. By Advertisers and on Sign-boards.

Two young women want washing.

Teeth extracted with great pains.

Babies taken and finished in ten minutes by a country photographer.

Wood and coal split.

Wanted, a female who has a knowledge of fitting boots of a good moral character.

For sale, a handsome piano, the property of a young lady who is leaving Scotland in a walnut case with turned legs.

A large Spanish blue gentleman's cloak lost in the neighborhood of the market.

To be sold, a splendid gray horse, calculated for a charger, or would

carry a lady with a switch tail.

Wanted, a young man to take charge of horses of a religious turn of mind.

A lady advertises her desire for a husband "with a Roman nose having strong religious tendencies."

Wanted, a young man to look after a horse of the Methodist persuasion.

A chemist inquires, "Will the gentleman who left his stomach for analysis please call and get it, together with the result?"

Wanted, an accomplished poodle nurse. Wages, \$5.00 a week.

In the far West a man advertises for a woman "to wash, iron and milk one or two cows."

Lost a cameo brooch representing Venus and Adonis on the Drumcondra Road about 10 o'clock on Tuesday evening.

An advertiser, having made an advantageous purchase, offers for sale, on very low terms, "six dozen of prime port wine, late the property of a gentleman forty years of age, full of body, and with a high bouquet."

A steamboat-captain, in advertising for an excursion, closes thus: "Tickets, 25 cents; children half price, to be had at the captain's office."

Among carriages to be disposed of, mention is made of "a mail phaeton, the property of a gentleman with a moveable head as good as new."

An inducement to return property is offered as follows: "If the gentleman who keeps the shoe store with a red head will return the umbrella of a young lady with whalebone ribs and an iron handle to the slate-roofed grocer's shop, he will hear of something to his advantage, as the same is a gift of a deceased mother now no more with the name engraved upon it."

An English matrimonial advertisement reads as follows: "A young man about 25 years of Age, in a very good trade, whose Father will make him worth £1000, would willingly embrace a suitable MATCH. He has been

brought up a Dissenter with his Parents, and is a sober man."

A landlady, innocent of grammatical knowledge, advertises that she has "a fine, airy, well-furnished bedroom for a gentleman twelve feet square"; another has "a cheap and desirable suit of rooms for a respectable family in good repair"; still another has "a hall bedroom for a single woman 8 × 12."

A photographer's sign reads: "This style 3 pictures finished in fifteen minutes while you wait for twenty-five cents beautifully colored."

A cheap restaurant displays this sign: "Oyster pies open all night," and "Coffee and cakes off the griddle."

A baker displays the sign, "Family Baking Done Here." The sign would look more appropriate if it were in front of some of our "cool and well-ventilated" summer-resort hotels.

The sign at Abraham Lowe's inn, Douglas, Isle of Man, is accompanied by this quaint verse:

"I'm Abraham Lowe, and half way up the hill,  
If I were higher up wat's funnier still,  
I should be Lowe. Come in and take your fill  
Of porter, ale, wine, spirits what you will.  
Step in, my friend, I pray no further go,  
My prices, like myself, are always low."

On a vacant lot back of Covington, Kentucky, is posted this sign: "No plane base Boll on these Primaces."

Notice in a Hoboken ferry-boat: "The seats in this cabin are reserved for ladies. Gentlemen are requested not to occupy them until the ladies are seated."

A sign in a Pennsylvania town reads as follows: "John Smith, teacher of cowtillions and other dances--grammar taut in the neatest manner--fresh salt herrin on draft--likewise Goodfreys cordjial--rutes sassage and other garden truck--N. B. bawl on friday nite--prayer meetin chuesday--also salme singing by the quire."

The following notice appeared on the fence of a vacant lot in Brooklyn:  
"All persons are forbidden to throw ashes on this lot under penalty of  
the law or any other garbage."

A barber's sign in Buffalo, N.Y., has the following: "This is the place  
for physiognomical hair-cutting and ecstatic shaving and shampooing."

A San Francisco boot-black, of poetic aspirations, proclaims his  
superior skill in the following lines, pasted over the door of his  
establishment:

"No day was e'er so bright,  
So black was never a night,  
As will your boots be, if you get  
Them blacked right in here, you bet!"

The following appears on a Welsh shoemaker's sign-board: "Pryce Dyas  
Coblar, dealer in Bacco Shag and Pig Tail Bacon and Ginarbread, Eggs  
laid by me, and very good Paradise in the summer, Gentlemen and Lady can  
have good Tae and Crumpets and Straw berry with a scim milk, because I  
can't get no cream. N. B. Shuse and Boots mended very well."

An Irish inn exhibits the following in large type:

"Within this hive we're all alive,  
With whiskey sweet as honey;  
If you are dry, step in and try,  
But don't forget your money."

An inn near London displays a board with the following inscription:

" Call --Softly,  
Drink Moderately,  
Pay Honourably ;  
Be good Company,  
Part FRIENDLY,  
Go HOME quietly.  
Let those lines be no MAN'S sorrow,  
Pay to DAY and i'll TRUST tomorrow."



## ENGLISH AS SHE IS WROTE... III. For Epitaphs.

A terse account of an untimely end is given upon a stone in a Mexican church-yard:

"He was young, he was fair  
But the Injuns raised his hair."

The following may be read upon the tombstone of Lottie Merrill, the young huntress of Wayne County, Pennsylvania: "Lottie Merrill lays hear she didnt know wot it wuz to be afeered but she has hed her last tussel with the bars and theyve scooped her she was a good girl and she is now in heaven. It took six big bars to get away with her. She was only 18 years old."

Upon the tomb of a boy who died of eating too much fruit, this quaint epitaph conveys a moral:

" Currants have check'd the current of my blood,  
And berries brought me to be buried here;  
Pears have par'd off my body's hardihood,  
And plums and plumbers spare not one so spare .  
Fain would I feign my fall; so fair a fare

Lessens not hate, yet 'tis a lesson good.  
Gilt will not long hide guilt, such thin washed ware  
Wears quickly, and its rude touch soon is rued.  
Grave on my grave some sentence grave and terse,  
That lies not as it lies upon my clay,  
But in a gentle strain of unstrained verse,  
Prays all to pity a poor patty's prey,  
Rehearses I was fruitful to my hearse,  
Tells that my days are told, and soon I'm toll'd away."

In Glasgow Cathedral is an epitaph, which is engraved on the lid of a very old sarcophagus, discovered in the crypt:

"Our Life's a flying Shadow, God's the Pole,  
The Index pointing at him is our Soul,  
Death's the Horizon, when our Sun is set,  
Which will through Chryst a Resurrection get."

In a grave-yard at Montrose, in Scotland, this inscription may still be seen:

"Here lies the Body of  
George Young  
And of all his posterity for  
fifty years backwards."

This brief announcement may be read in Wrexham church-yard, Wales:

"Here lies five babies and children dear  
Three at Owestry and two here."

In a church-yard near London the following may be deciphered:

"Killed by an omnibus why not?  
So quick a death a boon is  
Let not his friends lament his lot  
For mors omnibus communis."

There is an unqualified Hibernianism in the following:

"Here lies the remains of  
Thomas Melstrom who died

in Philadelphia March 17th  
Had he lived he would have  
been buried here."

A good deal of positive information is conveyed in this epitaph:

"Here lies, cut down like unripe fruit  
The wife of Deacon Amos Shute;  
She died of drinking too much coffee,  
Anny dominy eighteen forty."

To the victim of an accident:

"Here lies the body of James Hambrick which was accidentally shot in the  
Pacas River by a young man with one of Colts large revolvers with no  
stopper for the hand for to rest on. It was one of the old fashioned  
sort, brass mounted and of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

William Curtis, who was famous for his bad grammar, may have composed  
his own epitaph:

"Here lies William Curtis  
Our late Lord Mayor  
Who has left this world,  
And gone to that there."

In a church-yard in London, evidently written by a Cockney:

"Here lies John Ross.  
Kicked by a Hoss."

In Trinity church-yard, New York, this inscription may be read:

"Val. ----  
Sidney Breese.  
June 9 17--.  
Made by himself.  
Ha! Sidney, Sidney  
Liest thou here?  
I lye here  
Till Times last Extremity."

Upon a stone, under the Grocers' Arms, is this inscription, in memory of Garrard, a tea-dealer:

"Garret some called him  
But that was too lye  
His name is Garrard  
Who now here doth lye  
Weepe not for him  
Since he is gone before  
To heaven where Grocers  
There are many more."

The value of phonetic spelling is set forth in this terse memorial:

"Here lies two brothers by misfortune surrounded  
One died of his wounds, the other was drowned."

Resignation and an eye to the main chance are combined in the following:

"Beneath this stone, in hope of Zion  
Doth lie the landlord of the Lion,  
His son keeps in the business still  
Resigned unto the heavenly Will."

In a church-yard in Wiltshire, England:

"Beneath this stone lies our dear child  
Whos' gone away from we  
For evermore into eternity;  
When we do hope that we shall go to he  
But him can never come back to we."

On Mrs. Sarah Newman:

"Pain was my portion  
Physic was my food  
Groans was my devotion  
Drugs done me no good.  
Christ was my physician  
Knew what way was best  
To ease me of my pain  
He took my soul to rest."

An inscription to four wives:

"To the memory of my four wives, who all died within the space of ten years, but more pertectler to the last Mrs. Sally Horne who has left me and four dear children, she was a good, sober and clean soul and may i soon go to her.

"Dear wives if you and i shall all go to heaven,  
The Lord be blest for then we shall be even.

"William Joy Horne, Carpenter."

On a dyer:

"He died to live and lived to dye."

On Mrs. Lee and her son:

"In her life she did her best  
Now I hope her soul's at rest.  
Also her son Tom lies at her feet  
He lived till he made both ends meet."

At Edinburgh:

"John Mc pherson  
Was a wonderful person  
He stood 6 ft 2 without his shoe  
And he was slew.  
At Waterloo."

One John Round was lost at sea, and in the grave-yard of his native place a stone was erected with the following couplet inscribed thereon:

"Under this bed lies John Round  
Who was lost at sea and never found."

In an old church-yard in Ireland:

"Here lies John Highley whose father and mother were drowned on their passage to America. Had they lived they would have been buried here."

In a church-yard in Ohio:

"Under this sod  
And under these trees  
Lieth the Bod  
Y of Solomon Pease.  
He's not in this hole  
But only his pod.  
He shelled out his soul  
And went up to his God."

From a tombstone in Cornwall, England:

"Father and mother and I  
Lie buried here asunder;  
Father and mother lie buried here,  
And I lie buried yonder."

On Eliza Newman:

"Like a tender Rose Tree was my Spouse to me;  
Her offspring Pluckt too long deprived of life was she.  
Three went before. Her Life went with the Six  
I stay with 3 Our sorrows for to mix  
Till Christ our only hope, Our Joys doth fix."

On a drummer, in an English church-yard:

"Tom Clark was a drummer, who went to the war,  
And was killed by a bullet, and his soul sent for;  
There were no friends to mourn him, for his virtues were rare,  
He died like a man, and like a Christian bear."

On a stone near Appomattox Court-house, Virginia:

"Robert C Wright was born June 26th 1772 Died July 2. 1815 by the blood  
thrusty hand of John Sweeny Sr Who was massacred with the Nife then a  
London Gun discharge a ball penetrate the Heart that give the immortal  
wound."

At Middletown, Connecticut, is the following:

"This lovely, pleasant child--  
He was our only one,  
Altho' we've buried three before--  
Two daughters and a son."

The controlling power of rhyme is well illustrated in the subjoined,  
from a tombstone in Manchester:

"Here lies alas! more's the pity,  
All that remains of Nicholas Newcity.

"N. B.--His name was Newtown."

Another instance of how rhyming difficulties may be overcome is as  
follows:

"Here lies the remains of Thomas Woodhen,  
The most amiable of husbands and excellent of men.

"N. B.--His real name was Woodcock, but it wouldn't  
come in rhyme. His Widow. "

The subjoined contains a solemn warning:

"My wife has left me, she's gone up on high,  
She was thoughtful while dying, and said 'Tom, don't cry.'  
She was a great beauty, so every one knows,  
With Hebe like features and a fine Roman nose;  
She played the piano, and was learning a ballad,  
When she sickened and die-did from eating veal salad."

Upon a tombstone in Pennsylvania:

"Battle of Shiloh.  
April 6 1862

John D L was born March 26 1839 in the town of West  
Dresden State of New York where the wicked cease from  
troubling and the weary are at rest."

A tombstone in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, has these lines:

"When you my friends are passing by,  
And this inform you where I lie,  
Remember you ere long must have,  
Like me, a mansion in the grave,  
Also 3 infants, 2 sons and a daughter."



THE END

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