

APPENDIX B

English Spelling

The following specimens are intended to illustrate the discussion in § 156. The first quotation, from the *Ormulum*, is included as the earliest conscious attempt at reform. The others illustrate either avowed efforts at uniform practice, or self-evident striving, within limits, at consistency.

I

Dedication to the *Ormulum*, c. 1200.

Nu, broþerr Wallterr, broþerr min
& broþerr min i Crisstenndom
& broþerr min i Godess hus,
þurh þatt witt hafenn takenn ba
Unnderr kanunnkess had & lif,
Icc hafe don swa summ þu badd,
Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh
Affterr þatt little witt þatt me
þu þohhtesst tatt itt mihhte wel
3iff Ennglissh folc, forr lufe off Crist,
& **foll3henn** itt & fillenn itt
& forrþi **3errndesst** tu þatt icc
& icc itt hafe forþedd te,
& unnc birrþ baþe þannkenn Crist
Icc hafe sammnedd o þiss boc
þatt sinndenn o þe messeboç
& **a33** affterr þe goddspell stannt
þatt mann birrþ spellenn to þe folc

affterr þe flæshess kinde;
þrrh fulluhht & þurh trowwþe;
3ét o be bride wise.

an **re3hell**boc^{to} **foll3**henn,
 swa summ Sannt Awwstin sette; 5
 & forpedd te þin wille,
 goddspelless **hall3**he láre,
 min Drihhtin hafeþþ lenedd.
 till mikell frame turnenn,
 itt wollde **3erne**lernenn, 10
 wiþþ þohht, wiþþ word, wiþþ dede.
 þiss werre þe shollde wirrkenn;
 acc all þurh Cristess hellpe;
 þatt itt iss brohht till ende.
 þa goddspelless neh alle, 15
 inn all þe **3er** att messe.
 þatt tatt te goddsPELL meneþþ,
 off **þe33re** same nede...

II

Roger Ascham, *Toxophilus*, 1545.

If any man woulde blame me, eyther for takynge such a matter in hande,
 or els for writing it in the Englyshe tongue, this answere I may make hym,
 that whan the beste of the realme thinke it honest for them to use, I one of
 the meanest sorte, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write: And though
 to have written it in an other tonge, had bene bothe 5 more profitable for
 my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can thinke my labour
 wel bestowed, yf with a little hynderaunce of my profyt and name, maye
 come any fourtheraunce, to the pleasure or commoditie, of the gentlemen
 and yeomen of Englande, for whose sake I tooke this matter in hande.
 And as for ye Latin or greke tonge, every 10 thing is so excellently done
 in them, that none can do better: In the Englysh tonge contrary, every
 thinge in a maner so meanly, bothe for the matter and handelynge, that no
 man can do worse. For therein the least learned for the moste part, have
 ben alwayes moost redye to wryte. And they whiche had leaste hope in
 latin, have bene moste 15 boulde in englyshe: when surelye every man
 that is moste ready to taulke, is not moost able to wryte. He that wyll
 wryte well in any tongue, muste folowe thys councel of Aristotle, to
 speake as the common people do, to thinke as wise men do; and so
 shoulde every man understande hym, and the iudgement of wyse men
 allowe hym. 20 Many English writers have not done so, but usinge

straunge wordes as latin, french and Italian, do make all thinges darke and harde...

III

Sir John Cheke, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, c. 1550.

On ^tȳ dai Jesus comming from ^eȳ hous, sat bi ^eȳ see sijd, and much compaini was ^{gayerd togiyer}, in so much ^tȳ he went into á boot and set him doun ^{yeer} and al ^eȳ hool companí stood on ^eȳ bank. And he spaak unto ^{yem} much in biwordes and said. On a tijm ^eȳ souer went forth to soow, and whil he was in soowíng summ fel bi ^eȳ wais sijd, and ^eȳ birds 5 cam and deuoured it. and somm fel in stooni places, wheer it had not much earth, and it cam up bi and bi, becaus it had no depth in th' earth, and when ^eȳ sonn was risen it was burnt up, and bicause it had no root it dried up.... ^{Oyer} fel in ^eȳ good ground, and ielded fruit, summ an hunderd, sum threescoor, sum thurtí. He ^tȳ hath ears to heer let him 10 heer.

IV

Richard Stanyhurst, *The First Foure Bookes of Virgil His Æneis*, 1582, Dedication.

Hauing therefore (mi good lord) taken vpon mee too execute soom part of master *Askam* his wyl, who, in his goulden pamphlet, intituled *thee Schoolemayster*, dooth wish thee Vniuersitie students too applie theyre wittes in bewtifying oure English language with heroical verses: I heeld no *Latinist* so fit, too geeue thee onset on, as *Virgil*, who, for his 5 peerelesse style, and machlesse stuffe, dooth beare thee prick and price among al thee Roman Poëts. How beyt I haue heere haulf a guesh, that two sortes of carpers wyl seeme too spurne at this myne enterprise. Thee one vtterlie ignorant, thee oother meanelye letterd. Thee ignorant wyl imagin, that thee passage was nothing craggie, in as much as M. 10 *Phaere* hath broken thee ice before mee: Thee meaner clarcks wyl suppose, my trauail in theese heroical verses too carrye no great difficultie, in that yt lay in my choise, too make what word I would short or long, hauing no English writer beefore mee in this kind of poëtrye with whose squire I should leauel my syllables. Too shape 15 therefor an answer too thee first, I say, they are altogether in a wrong box:

considering that such woordes, as fit M. *Phaer*, may bee very vnapt for mee, which they would confesse, yf theyre skil were, so much as spare, in theese verses. Further more I stand so nicelie on my pantoffles that way, as yf I could, yeet I would not renne on thee skore 20 with M. *Phaer*, or ennie oother, by borrowing his termes in so copious and fluent a language, as oure English tongue is.

V

Richard Mulcaster, *Elementarie*, 1582.

It were a thing verie praiseworthy in my opinion, and no lesse profitable then praise worthie, if som one well learned and as laborious a man, wold gather all the words which we vse in our English tung, whether naturall or incorporate, out of all professions, as well learned as not, into one dictionarie, and besides the right writing, which is 5 incident to the Alphabete, wold open vnto vs therein, both their naturall force, and their proper vse: that by his honest trauell we might be as able to judge of our own tung, which we haue by rote, as we ar of others, which we learn by rule. The want whereof, is the onelie cause why, that verie manie men, being excellentlie well learned in foren 10 speche, can hardlie discern what theie haue at home, still shooting fair, but oft missing far, hard censors ouer other, ill executors themselues. For easie obtaining is enemie to iudgement, not onlie in words, and naturall speche, but in greater matters, and verie important.

VI

John Chamberlain: Excerpt from a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, London, October 31, 1618. [S.P.Dom., Jac. I, ciii, 58].

[Sir Walter Raleigh's conduct on the day of his execution.]

He made a speach of more than halfe an howre, wherein he cleered himself of having any intelligence with Fraunce, (which had ben objected to him,) more then to save his life and hide himself from the Kinges indignation: then that he never had any yll intent towards his Majestie not so much as in thought, that he had no other pretence nor 5 end in his last viage then the enriching of the King, the realme, himself and his followers: that he never had any undutifull speach concerning his Majestie with the runagate French phisician, nor ever offered to Sir Lewes Stukeley 10000^{li} to go with him into Fraunce, nor told him that the Lord Carew had geuen him advise to be gon, and that he and the 10 Lord of Doncaster wold maintain him in Fraunce, of which points he had ben accused by them, and though he protested not only to forgeve them but to pray God to forgeve them, yet he thought fit to geve men warning of such persons. To all this and much

more he tooke God so often and so solemnly to witnes, that he was beleved of all that heard 15 him. He spake somewhat of the death of the earle of Essex and how sory he was for him, for though he was of a contrarie faction, yet he fore-saw that those who esteemed him then in that respect, wold cast him of as they did afterward. He confessed himself the greatest sinner that he knew, and no marvayle as having ben a souldier, a seaman and a 20 courtier: he excused the disfiguring of himself by the example of David who fained himself mad to avoide daunger: and never heard yt imputed to him for a sinne. In conclusion he spake and behaved himself so, without any shew of feare or affectation that he moved much commiseration, and all that saw him confesse that his end was *omnibus 25 numeris absolutus*, and as far as man can discern every way perfect. Yt will not be amisse to set downe some few passages of divers that I have heard. The morning that he went to execution there was a cup of excellent sacke brought him and beeing asked how he liked yt, as the fellow (saide he) that drincking of St. Giles bowle as he went to Tiburn, 30 saide yt was goode drinke yf a man might tarrie by yt. As he went from Westminster Hall to the Gatehouse, he espied Sir Hugh Beeston in the thronge and calling to him prayed he wold see him dye to morow: Sir Hugh to make sure worke got a letter from Secretarie Lake to the sheriffe to see him placed conveniently, and meeting them as 35 they came nere to the scaffold delivered his letter but the sheriffe by mishap had left his spectacles at home and put the letter in his pocket. In the mean time Sir Hugh beeing thrust by, Sir Walter bad him farewell and saide I know not what shift you will make, but I am sure to have a place. When the hangman asked him forgiveness he desired to 40 see the axe, and feeling the edge he saide that yt was a fayre sharpe medicine to cure him of all his diseases and miseries. When he was laide downe some found fault that his face was west-ward, and wold have him turned, wherupon rising he saide yt was no great matter which way a mans head stode so his heart lay right. He had geven 45 order to the executioner that after some short meditation when he strecht forth his handes he shold dispatch him. After once or twise putting foorth his handes, the fellow out of timerousnes (or what other cause) forbearing, he was faine to bid him strike, and so at two blowes he tooke of his head, though he stirred not a whit after the first. The 50 people were much affected at the sight insomuch that one was heard say that we had not such another head to cut of.

VII

James Howell, *Epistolæ Ho-EHanae*, 1645.

To the Intelligent Reader

Amongst other reasons which make the *English* Language of so small extent, and put strangers out of conceit to learn it, one is, That we do not

pronounce as we write, which proceeds from divers superfluous Letters, that occur in many of our words, which adds to the difficulty of the Language: Therefore the Author hath taken pains to retrench such 5 redundant, unnecessary Letters in this Work (though the *Printer* hath not bin carefull as he should have bin) as amongst multitudes of other words may appear in these few, *done, some, come*; Which though we, to whom the speech is *connaturall*, pronounce as monosyllables, yet when strangers com to read them, they are apt to make them 10 dissillables, as *do-ne, so-me, co-me*; therefore such an *e* is superfluous.

Moreover, those words that have the *Latin* for their originall, the *Author* prefers that Orthography, rather than the *French*, wherby divers Letters are spar'd, as *Physic, Logic, Afric*, not *Physique, Logique, Afrique*; *favor, honor, labor*, not *favour, honour, labour*, and very 15 many more, as also he omits the *Dutch k*, in most words; here you shall read *peeple* not *pe-ople*, *tresure* not *treasure*, *toung* not *ton-gue*, &c. *Parlement* not *Parliament*, *busines*, *witnes*, *sicknes*, not *businessse, witnesse, sicknesse*; *star, war, far*, not *starre, warre, farre*, and multitudes of such words, wherein the two last Letters may well be 20 spar'd: Here you shall also read *pity, piety, witty*, not *piti-e, pieti-e, witti-e*, as strangers at first sight pronounce them, and abundance of such like words.

The new Academy of wits call'd *l'Academie de beaux esprits*, which the late Cardinall *de Richelieu* founded in *Paris*, is now in hand to 25 reform the *French* Language in this particular, and to weed it of all superfluous Letters, which makes the *Toung* differ so much from the *Pen*, that they have expos'd themselves to this contumelious Proverb, *The Frenchman doth neither pronounce as he writes, nor speak as he thinks, nor sing as he pricks*. 30

Aristotle hath a topic Axiom, that *Frustra fit per plura, quod fieri potest per pauciora*, *When fewer may serve the turn more is in vain*. And as this rule holds in all things els, so it may be very well observ'd in Orthography.

VIII

Edward Phillips, *The New World of English Words*, 1658, Preface.

Whether this innovation of words deprave, or enrich our English tongue is a consideration that admits of various censures, according to the different fancies of men. Certainly as by an invasion of strangers, many of the old inhabitants must needs be either slain, or forced to fly the Land; so it happens in the introducing of strange words, the old ones in 5 whose room they come must needs in time be forgotten, and grow obsolete; sometimes indeed, as Mr. *Cambden* observes, there is a peculiar significancy in some of the old Saxon words, as in stead of fertility they had wont to say *Eordswela*, which is as much as the wealth, or riches of the earth, yet let us not bewail the losse of them for 10 this, for we shall finde divers Latin

words, whose Etymology is as remarkable, and founded upon, as much reason, as in the word *intricate*, which (coming from *Tricæ* i.e. those small threads about Chicken legs, that are an encombrance to them in their going) signifieth entangled; and it is worth the taking notice, that although 15 divers Latin words cannot be explained, but by a Periphrasis as *Insinuation* is a winding ones self in by little and little, yet there are others, both French and Latin, that are match't with Native words equally significant, equally in use among us, as with the French *Denie*, we parallel our *gainsay*, with the Latin *resist* our *withstand*, with 20 *Interiour*, *inward*, and many more of this nature: So that by this means these forrainers instead of detracting ought from our tongue, add copiousnesse and vari[e]ty to it, now whether they add, or take from the ornament of it, it is rather to be referr'd to sence and fancy, then to be disputed by arguments. That they come for the most part from a 25 language, as civil as the Nation wherein it was first spoken, I suppose is without controversy, and being of a soft and even sound, nothing savouring of harshnesse, or barbarisme, they must needs mollifie the tongue with which they incorporate, and to which, though of a different nature, they are made fit and adapted by long use; in fine, let a man 30 compare the best English, now written, with that which was written three, or four ages ago, and if he be not a doater upon antiquity, he will judge ours much more smooth, and gratefull to the ear: for my part that which some attribute to *Spencer* as his greatest praise, namely his frequent use of obsolete expressions, I account the greatest blemish to 35 his Poem, otherwise most excellent, it being an equal vice to adhere obstinately to old words, as fondly to affect new ones.