

Authors who write for THE JOURNAL in English English and find their products modified because the Editors and printers are American (as is done reciprocally to manuscripts written by Americans which are published in British periodicals), may be interested in the following quotations:

England and America are two countries separated by the same language.—*George Bernard Shaw.*

We and the Americans have much in common, but there is always the language barrier.—*Oscar Wilde.*

[The American colonists] unhappily could bring over no better English than Shakespeare's.—*James Russell Lowell.*

The last quotation is anent the fact that many "Americanisms" are in fact archaisms, relics of the pure Elizabethan speech imported by the original colonists and preserved in use in the United States, while the mother tongue of the homeland gradually digressed and diverged from the 17th Century forms and accents once shared in common.

A notable example is the word *gotten* as the past participle of the verb *to get*. An Englishman never uses *gotten*; he considers it incorrect, discordant, and an Americanism. But *gotten* was once the proper participial form. In Middle English the infinitive of the verb *to get* was *geten*; the past tense was *gat* (still very much with us in the Old Testament's list of "begats"); and the past participle was *getten*. In time *gat* became *got*, and *getten* became *gotten*. Toward the middle of the 17th Century the final syllable of *gotten* withered and faded away in England, though it flourishes lustily as ever in both written and spoken American usage today.

Another, although minor, distinction between English and American English is in the treatment of collective nouns—like *government*, *company*, *team*, and the like. In England such words are regarded as plural, but in the United States as singular. Thus: "The government have committed themselves..." vs "The administration has committed itself..." In England the headline: "Oxford row to close victory", would be, in the U.S.: "Yale rows to a close victory." But the "immortal remark" of Charlie Dressen, about the baseball team: "The Giants is dead," is going a bit too far.

The foregoing (except for the opinion expressed in the last phrase) is all taken, often verbatim, with permission, from a much more encompassing article entitled "A Great Sea Change Across the Atlantic," by Lincoln Barnett, in *Life International*, for March 26, 1962. That article discusses, among many other things, such changes as those from *colour* to *color*, *centre* to *center*, and of course the one from *gaol* to *jail*. Also the reduction from two l's (-ll-) to one in such English words as *traveller*, *cancelled*, etc. This article is the fourth of a series of five on The English Language that appeared in the magazine mentioned, in the early months of this year—a series that one may hope will be published in book form—H. W. W.