

# **THE EGREGIOUS ENGLISH**

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The Egregious English by Angus McNeill

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**ANGUS MCNEILL**

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ENGLISH**



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EGREGIOUS ENGLISH

BY  
ANGUS McNEILL



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# The Egregious English

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## CHAPTER I

### APOLLO

It has become the Englishman's habit, one might almost say the Englishman's instinct, to take himself for the head and front of the universe. The order of creation began, we are told, in protoplasm. It has achieved at length the Englishman. Herein are the culmination and ultimate glory of evolutionary processes. Nature, like the seventh-standard boy in a board school, "can get no higher." She has made the Englishman, and her work therefore is done. For the continued progress of the world and all that in it is, the Englishman will make due

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✓ provision. He knows exactly what is wanted, and by himself it shall be supplied. There is little that can be considered distinguishingly English which does not reflect this point of view. As an easy-going, entirely confident, imperturbable piece of arrogance, the Englishman has certainly no mammalian compeer. Even in the blackest of his troubles he perceives that he is great. "I shall muddle through," he says. He is expected and understood to muddle through; and, muddle through or not, he invariably believes he has done it. Sheer complacency bolsters him up on every hand. At his going forth the rest of the world is fain to abase itself in the dust. He is the strong man, the white man of white men. He is the rich, clean sportsman, the incomparable, the fearless, the intolerable. And by "Englishman" the world has learned not to mean "Briton." The world has been taught to discriminate. It has regarded the Britannic brotherhood; and though it forgets that the Gael and the Celt are Britons, it takes its Englishman for

a Briton, only with a difference. On the other hand, it is keenly sensible of sundry facts—as that it is the Englishman who rules the waves and the Englishman upon whose dominions the sun never sets; that the British flag is the English flag, the British army the English army, and the British navy the English navy, and that Scotland and Ireland, with Wales, are English appanages. It would be foolish to assert that the Englishman has greatly concerned himself in either the promulgation or the acceptance of these notions. But he holds them dear, and they are ineradicably planted in his subconsciousness.

One is inclined to think, however, that, while the supremacy and superiority of the Englishman have been received without traverse in his own dominions, there are those in outer darkness—on the Continent, in Ireland, and even in Scotland—who admit no such supremacy and no such superiority. Nay, there be persons breathing the breath of life who, so far from looking upon the