

Tom Telltroth (fl. 1743)

Description

Tom Telltroth here is a pseudonym used by an author wishing to remain anonymous. Variations of this pen name are found in numerous sixteenth and seventeenth century texts. The name symbolizes a narrator who claims to speak the truth. In 1600, John Lane took on this persona in *Tom Tel-Troths Message, and his pens complaint*, which condemns the vices of England and mimics the 1593 anonymous work, *Tell-Trothes New Yeares Gift Beeing Robin Good-fellowes newes out of those Counties where inhabited neither Charity nor honesty*. The pamphleteer Joseph Swetnam's *The Arraignement of Lewd, Idle, Froward, and Unconstant Women* (1615) was written under the pseudonym of Thomas Tell-Troth and precipitated debate about women's place in England. Later in the century John Oldman's *Tom tell-troth, or, A dialogue between the Devil and the Pope about carrying on the plot* (c. 1679), tells of a grand conspiracy against the Protestants. The Tom Telltroth of our eighteenth-century poem in *The Gentleman's Magazine* (1743) above remains anonymous to this Scavenger.