

**THE DEAN'S ENGLISH, A
CRITICISM ON THE DEAN
OF CANTERBURY'S ESSAYS
ON THE QUEEN'S ENGLISH**

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The Dean's English, a criticism on the Dean of Canterbury's Essays on the Queen's English by G. Washington Moon

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"He who cannot express his thoughts correctly in his own language, is not likely to obtain credit for much knowledge of any other; nor will an ill-spelt, ungrammatical letter impress anyone with the idea that the writer of it is an 'educated' man; while, on the other hand, the Englishman whose linguistic acquirements do not extend beyond the language of Shakspeare, but who knows that thoroughly and can wield it well, possesses an instrument with which he may fight his way to almost any position he may choose to aspire to, whether he turn his thoughts to poetry or to politics, to literature or to commerce."—

THE READER, January 28, 1865.

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THE
DEAN'S ENGLISH

A Criticism on the Dean of Canterbury's Essays

OF THE

QUEEN'S ENGLISH.

BY
G. WASHINGTON MOON,
FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LITERATURE.

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Fourth Edition.
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"Literature, if it is to flourish, must have a standard of taste built up, which shall expand to meet new forms of excellence, but which shall preserve that which is excellent in old forms, and shall serve as a guide to the rejection of whatever is bad, pretentious, and artificial; and it is the business of critics to see that this standard is built up and maintained."—SATURDAY REVIEW.

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION.

I HAVE been asked not to publish another edition of this work; but I do not think I should be benefiting the cause of literature by complying with that request. "*The care of the national language,*" says Schlegel, "*is at all times a sacred trust. Every man of education should make it the object of his unceasing concern to pre-serve his language pure*"; and I consider that I am doing only my duty in that respect, when I re-issue this work, which, by exposing the errors of one of exalted position and reputed learning, makes a

“light in the church” serve as a beacon to all around.

I wish it to be distinctly understood that in publishing these criticisms I have not been actuated by any feeling of ill-will towards the Dean of Canterbury. I object not to the man, but to the man’s language; it is faulty in the extreme; and since the faults of teachers, if suffered to pass unreproved, soon become the teachers of faults, it was necessary that some one should take upon himself the task of “demonstrating”, as ‘*The Edinburgh Review*’ said, “that while the Dean undertook to instruct others, he was himself but a castaway in matters of grammar”. As a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, one of the objects of which is “to preserve the purity of the English language”, I took upon myself the demonstration. How far I have succeeded, each

individual reader will determine for himself; but the rapid sale of three editions of '*The Dean's English*', and the demand for a fourth, give very flattering evidence that, by the public generally, the work has been favourably received.

Since the publication of the last edition of '*The Dean's English*', the Dean has brought out the second edition of '*The Queen's English*'. One circumstance, in connexion with that, is worthy of remark. In '*Good Words*' the Dean said to his readers,—"*The less you turn your words right or left to observe Mr. Moon's rules, the better*". It will provoke a smile on the face of the reader of these pages to be told, that the Dean himself, although he gives this advice to *others*, has altered and struck out, altogether not fewer than eight-and-twenty passages which I had condemned as faulty. For the entertain-

ment of the curious in such matters, I have given, in parallel columns in this edition, the sentences as originally published in '*Good Words*', and condemned in '*The Dean's English*'; and the altered sentences as they now appear in the Dean's second edition of his '*Queen's English*'.

The Dean's book contains much valuable information, collected from various sources; but it is blended with so very much that would be really injurious to the student of literature, that the work can never safely be recommended for his guidance. The style, too, in which it is written, is so hopelessly bad, that no amount of alteration could obtain for it the praise of being a model for chasteness and elegance of expression. We still read in it, of persons making "*a precious mess*" of their work! and expletives, we are