

ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOOK SOCIETY

**CURRENT
ENGLISH
USAGE**

FREDERICK T. WOOD

AIDS TO ENGLISH

CURRENT ENGLISH USAGE

A Concise Dictionary

BY
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THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BOOK SOCIETY

and

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PREFACE

THE aim of this book is a practical one: to provide an easy work of reference for those who wish to write good English. To some extent, therefore, it is necessarily prescriptive. It deals with points of syntax, punctuation, style, idiom, spelling and modern usage generally. With grammar as such it is not concerned, though specific grammatical points or instructions which may present difficulty have, of course, been included; but it has been assumed that anyone who reads the book will have a knowledge of the basic grammatical terms. Where differences of opinion exist, or where usage is changing, I have tried to avoid being too dogmatic, though I have usually counselled conservatism. In general I have sought not to encroach on the province of the ordinary dictionary, but I have felt it justifiable to draw attention to words which are often mis-spelt, misused or mispronounced. A number of examples of incorrect English are taken from newspapers, magazines and other periodicals, as well as from published reports of business houses and official bodies. Occasionally the name of the publication concerned has been given, but more often I have indicated merely the kind of publication, as 'a daily newspaper', 'a free Church weekly', 'a women's magazine', 'a church magazine', and so on. This anonymity has been dictated by three considerations: first, because even Homer may nod; secondly, because the author of a book such as this must necessarily collect his examples mainly from the limited number of periodicals which he reads fairly regularly, and it would be unfair to give the impression that these journals were culpable beyond the rest, or that the examples quoted were typical of the general standard of English to be found in their pages; and thirdly because many come from signed articles or form the correspondence columns. Anyone using the book, however, may rest assured that all such examples are genuine.

Certain words and constructions have been described as *Americanisms*. This does not necessarily mean that they are bad.

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