so you’ve corrected someone’s grammar on the internet...

Lee Murray, Monash University
we’ve all done it.
*my partner and I.*
CORRECTING OTHER PEOPLE’S GRAMMAR

it’s not a new thing
AN INTERLUDE

‘native’
If "Another Native" goes to Dublin he will certainly hear more good English than in most places—I am not Irish—but he would certainly hear more uniformly good English in any town in England than he can in Melbourne if he goes among the so-called well-educated classes.
Sir.—If a definite and practical result comes of the present discussion, you will have done colonial society a good service in permitting it. The pernicious habit, so fully
Sir,—With reference to the correspondence at present going on in your columns regarding the pronunciation of "young Victoria," while having to acknowledge with regret that our English tongue as spoken here is often very obnoxious to the ears of the educated, still, at the same time, it is rather amusing to read some of your correspondents' letters in to-day's issue.

To take, for instance, the first letter signed "Cantab." It is to be presumed from the nom de plume adopted that the writer has had the benefit of a Cambridge education; yet he, while criticising the Victorian manner of speaking, appears to be neglecting the proper application of the subjunctive mood (in more than one place) he has himself been guilty of murdering "Queen's English" in a most atrocious manner.

Take, for example, the sentence, "If another native goes to Dublin." Surely "Cantab's" education must have been sadly neglected if he were not taught that the subjunctive mood should follow the word "if," and that the third person singular of the present tense, subjunctive mood, of the verb "to go" is "if he go," not "if he goes."

Again further on, "Cantab" makes the same error, for he says, "If the nostrils are closed," using again the present indicative instead of the present subjunctive, viz., if the nostrils be closed.

Another correspondent, "An Australian," gives himself away at once in his opening sentence by committing the same fault, viz., "If a definite and practical result comes," instead of "If a definite and practical result come."

This is to be regretted, as it rather tends to spoil the effect of the writer's great command of words, which he undoubtedly possesses.

I must say, Sir, that being an Englishman, I like to see fair play, and may call your correspondents' attention to the old proverb, "People in glass houses," &c.—I am, &c.,

Jan. 10. ENGLISHMAN.
CORRECTING GRAMMAR

not particularly productive

... so, why?
we’re not doing it for the reasons we think we’re doing it
there’s no such thing as ‘correct’ English
varieties of English
standard (Australian) English
how does a standard variety become a standard variety?
it’s about power
but isn’t it just more logical?
... no.
AN EXAMPLE

youse
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>first person</td>
<td><em>I</em></td>
<td><em>we</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>second person</td>
<td><em>you</em></td>
<td><em>you</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>third person</td>
<td><em>she/he/it</em></td>
<td><em>they</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Singular</td>
<td>Plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First person</strong></td>
<td><em>I</em></td>
<td><em>we</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second person</strong></td>
<td><em>you</em></td>
<td><em>you</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third person</strong></td>
<td><em>she/he/it</em></td>
<td><em>they</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>singular</td>
<td>plural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>first person</strong></td>
<td>I</td>
<td>we</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>second person</strong></td>
<td>you</td>
<td>youse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>third person</strong></td>
<td>she/he/it</td>
<td>they</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
youse resolves an ambiguity
So

what’s going on?
CONSIDER

who uses youse?
not objective value, just **social** value
so

what are we reacting to?
WHAT ARE WE REACTING TO?

... our own social biases
but what of our friend ‘Englishman’?
Sir,—After the overwhelming testimony which has been brought to light in your valuable paper, I think, Sir, it cannot be with fairness denied that the charge of "faulty pronunciation" has been fully proved and brought home to "Young Victoria," who now penitently awaits your kind hand to conduct her out of the quagmire of linguistic impurity into which she has strayed.

I am, Sir, really surprised at the tone of "Englishman's" letter. One would think the writer had "entered" for a straw-splitting competition, and if such were the case he would assuredly be victorious, as your "Englishman" ever is.

It could have been only the spirit of hypercriticism which prompted him to attack "Cantab" for his omission of that rapidly disappearing usage, the subjunctive mood.

If "Englishman's" knowledge of grammar were co-extensive with that of "Cantab's" he would probably be aware of the fact that the subjunctive mood does not always follow "if," and that only where futurity is combined with contingency is the employment of that mood strictly correct.

This subjunctive devotee also censures "An Australian" for the same heinous offence. It is to be regretted that correspondents wander from the main point of the argument to the uncharitable criticism of each other's letters.—I am, &c.,

Jan. 12.

SYDNEY.
there’s no such thing as a ‘correct’ variety, just a prestigious one

engage with ideas, not grammar
thank you