

that those who do the most mischief are "the original fabricators of error, to wit: the men generally who write for the newspapers." Next to these he puts the "authors of the vapid, trashy, 'sensation novels' of the day." The fact, therefore, that the main portion of this book appeared in a New York newspaper probably accounts for the rhetorical, grammatical, and linguistic shortcomings which disfigure it from beginning to end.

The author quotes, to point his moral, certain strictures of Dean Alford, in the course of which the use of "individual" for the noun *man* is deprecated, but on the page which introduces this extract he uses the word, and repeats it in other places. He condemns the use of words of Latin origin, and yet uses "commence" for begin, and "denominate" for name or call. He points out instances in which the subjunctive mode is neglected, and then writes his own sentences in the same faulty style. He gives an entire chapter to the subject of misused words, and then writes, "It may be well to remark here . . . *on*;" "the student should practise line by line *on*;" and speaks of "rendering" the Church service. He writes of avoiding the "contraction" of a habit of formal utterance, forgetting that the word contraction means "the act of bringing into a narrow compass," and should not be used in that connection instead of "contracting." He pleads strongly for precision and against the use of expletives, and yet uses "scholar" for pupil, and crowds his pet expletives into his phrases until they become tiresome. For construction we present the following sentence (?) as an example: "Just as a man will write his own name more illegibly—and therefore worse—than he writes anything else." We notice the following expressions: "The entire *diameter* of the system" (of elocution), a "*depreciating* vulgarism" (for a depreciative vulgarism); "made rather a happy hit" (for a rather happy hit).

It must not be supposed that there are no merits in this book. One chapter on clerical elocution, for example, though hardly pertinent to the main topic, and though addressed only to the clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, contains suggestions that we should like to see observed. It is in many respects the best short address of its kind we have ever read, and ought to be put into a tract. But the astonishing coolness and positiveness with which the author condemns others for errors which he constantly commits himself, makes it fitting that his own efforts should be treated with exact care. Mr. Gould undoubtedly points out a number of faults, but he has not won the position of a philologist or of a writer of elegant style. He commends to Dean Trench "the first clause of Romans ii: 21," and says: "Unfortunately the Dean's English is full of faults; and since his practice is likely to be as pernicious, in the way of

example, as his precepts are sound in the way of direct teaching, it seems appropriate in a book on 'Errors in Language,' to point out some of his blunders, that they may be avoided, instead of imitated, by his students." Without approving the teachings of either Trench or Gould, we feel that duty demands of us to commend the ingredients of the former's chalice to the lips of the author of *Good English*, a book that is better described by the second portion of its title, "Popular Errors in Language," than by the first.

MR. GOULD'S POOR ENGLISH.*

MR. GOULD'S *Good English* is a reprint of a book which some will remember as having been published a dozen years ago. Owing to the fact that a portion of the volume treated subjects that have lost present interest, it now appears with fourteen pages less than it formerly had. Though thirty-four pages have been omitted, the space has been partially filled with new matter.

The tone of the book is very dogmatic, and one would suppose that the author's statements were beyond question, and that his style was unimpeachable. The style is, on the other hand, far from perfect, and we find the writer constantly offending against the canons of criticism which he lays down. Mr. Gould writes with a stiffness which seems to come from an attempt at an unnatural precision, cultivated by one the rudiments of whose education were not based upon thorough instruction.

Dean Trench and Noah Webster are his *bêtes noir*, and he pursues the latter with the unrelenting spirit of a Spanish Inquisitor. He finds the English language deteriorating remarkably, he tells us, and says on one page that the responsibility for the deplorable condition of affairs rests "mainly" on our good writers; but on another he says

* *Good English*; or *Popular Errors in Language*. By Edward S. Gould. Revised edition. A. C. Armstrong & Son. \$1.25.