



REVIEWER REVIEWED,

OR

A DEFENCE

OF

MR OTIS' ORATION.

THE REVIEWER REVIEWED.

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D E F E N C E

OF

AN ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE

THE "YOUNG MEN OF BOSTON,"

ON THE

FOURTH OF JULY, 1831,

By WILLIAM F. OTIS.

Doctor. How did you contract this swelling?

Dennis. By criticism.

Doctor. Criticism! That's a disease I never read or heard of in all my practice.

Swift.

BOSTON,

CARTER, HENDEE AND BABCOCK.

M DCCC XXXI.

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DEFENCE, &c.

To write an oration for the National Anniversary that shall please even a *respectable* number of readers, has now become a task of no little magnitude. Always involving some, and now no little responsibility, this task has generally been assigned to youths but just liberated from the college or academy, or to young lawyers just commencing practice, and turning politicians for the laudable purpose of filling their dockets; and as might be expected, it has generally been performed in a manner commensurate with the extensive knowledge, the long acquired and long accumulating experience, the enlarged views and liberal feelings of the enlightened and well disciplined undertakers. It must also be remembered that the young orators were educated in a country whose seminaries of instruction, from the university to the primary school, could not, until the publication of Mr Sullivan's *Political Class Book*, produce a single work, written or compiled for the purpose of instructing American youth generally in the laws and political institutions of their own country; and consequently, that they had no other fountains whence to imbibe the political philosophy that is proper for a citizen of a free republic, than those models of candor, veracity, purity and profundity, the newspapers!! With such qualifications, that is, without general views of politics; without definite ideas of their own institutions, or of their origin, objects, operations and tendencies; with scarcely one of that stock of ideas, without which no one should presume

to preach to an assemblage of American citizens about their political rights and obligations, these young orators have had no other alternative than to repeat the three told tale of revolutionary battles, and to ring the changes so well known to every school-boy, upon Bunker Hill, Saratoga and Yorktown; or to pour forth an edifying, chastening, refining effusion of the angry passions, illiberal feelings and unworthy motives engendered or excited by a state or county election.

From these there were a few exceptions. Occasionally an individual of riper years, grown mature if not old in studies and pursuits that might qualify him for the task, was seen to mount the pulpit, and offer something that seemed to give promise of a better fate than falling dead from the press, and which even seemed worthy of record as a specimen of National literature. But such things, like comets, were rare; and their returns, like those of comets, eluding calculation, were left chiefly to conjecture. Compared with the floods which the youthful teachers annually poured forth, they appeared like the fragments of Æneas' ships in the ocean:

‘ Apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto.’

The result is natural, and might have been anticipated. The National Anniversary is falling into disrepute, and orations on the Fourth of July have become a theme of derision, a subject of ridicule; and those who would gladly crowd around an orator that could pay them for listening, are almost afraid to approach one, unless of established reputation, because they expect to hear a tale, which, if not ‘told by an idiot,’ will at least be ‘full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.’

This result is indeed to be deplored; for the contempt, to use a strong term, inspired by such effusions, tends to a light estimation of the occasion which calls them forth, and might, in time, cause the anniversary to be remembered for no other purpose than jest and sarcasm. Yet the day is worthy of remembrance; for it not only added one to the nations of the earth, but traced for that one a new path, in which it was

destined to proceed in the march of political and moral improvement at a rate far exceeding the pace of others, and in which, as it went 'from strength to strength,' it was to become a terror to oppressors, a hope to the oppressed, and an example to all. The Declaration of Independence, like light from Heaven, dispelled the mists that for ages had enveloped the world, enabled mankind to see each other face to face as equals, to scan and measure the shapeless works called *governments*, among which they had been stumbling, and by which they had been bruised and lacerated and tortured, without ever questioning their propriety. It exploded the political metaphysics of Europe, which taught that the people were the subjects and property of the government, and that liberty was a grant from rulers, and proclaimed the great truth that the people are masters and the rulers their servants, and that the powers of rulers are trusts, confided by the people for their own benefit, and to endure during their pleasure.

For the purpose of discharging what they deemed a duty to their country, and making this duty the means of rational enjoyment, and in full confidence that some one could be found among them who could offer something better than the 'flat, stale, and unprofitable' effusions which had usually been poured from the pulpits on this occasion, a portion of the young men of Boston had resolved upon celebrating the National Anniversary of 1831 with an oration. Doubtless with due deliberation, and with sufficient knowledge of his possessing qualifications that would justify their choice, they selected for this task Mr WILLIAM FOSTER OTIS. This gentleman, having probably passed his thirtieth year, was deemed *young* enough to *pass muster*, to use a military phrase, as a *young man*, and *old* enough to offer some pretensions to maturity of judgment as a scholar and a politician. He had been *liberally*, that is, classically educated, had or might have profited by the instructions of a parent whose literary reputation is deservedly respectable in this 'Literary Emporium,' and of a kinsman, who, for extent, variety and accuracy of information, is surpassed by few of its

citizens. He was known also at the bar as a faithful and industrious practitioner, and had maintained a respectable standing as a representative in the State Legislature from the city of Boston. Such being the man who was chosen, doubtless his young constituents, and probably many who did not participate in their festivities, but knew something of him, expected a production that would be creditable to himself, and form another exception to the *nonsense* by which audiences on the Fourth of July had been too often fatigued and disgusted.

Some of them at least were not disappointed. Mr Otis *did* produce an oration, which, without being faultless, without being free from defects in style and inaccuracies in language, is replete with vigorous thoughts, elevated sentiments, and bold and striking delineations. He has exhibited a mind of some scope of vision and comprehension, a soul of some intrepidity, some ardor of aspiration after what is great and useful and beautiful in the organization and conduct of the social system. He has shown that he can feel, or at least describe, the full force of the principle, that man was made for a loftier destiny than to be born and to die in this world, that his course should be onward, his object perfection, and that of this perfection, liberty is but the means and not the end.

He begins with a sentiment that would honor older heads, and we would say warmer hearts, did not the tenor of his performance show, provided he speak sincerely, that few such could be found. This sentiment is, that we should meet on our National Anniversary, not for the purpose of national exultation, but of national self-examination; that the first would be sufficient, were we content with a comparative superiority over the despotisms and aristocracies around us; but that the second is required, if we aspire to something greater, and consider our freedom a sacred trust, to be preserved and *improved* for ourselves and our posterity. The sentiment is not only just, but noble and ennobling, and should be instilled into every American mind as an axiom, and engraven on every American heart as a principle of action. God wills us free! must be the ex-

clamation of every mind that comprehensively views his works, both physical and moral; for he wills it, the same mind must exclaim, because it is the most efficacious means of promoting the great ends of our creation, our own happiness and the glory of our Creator. His will be done! must be the response of every heart that aspires after these ends; and it must be done by considering freedom as a talent committed to our charge, not to be hidden in a napkin, or laid aside to be forgotten, but to be guarded, nurtured and improved, so that we can at any time render an account of our stewardship by showing an increase of an hundred fold. This sentiment would produce patriots of sterling value, instead of the base coin that too often bears a semblance of the lawful impression; for it teaches that men should love their country and seek its happiness, not because it is that spot of earth where they can indulge most largely in worldly gratifications, but because it is the will of HIM who gave them that country for a habitation, and all things in it for their good. It teaches men to look through their country to their God, and to seek the happiness of the one as the highest means of glorifying the other. It teaches the piety of patriotism.

He proceeds to say that the result of this national self-examination will be a conviction of our insecurity, of the dangers to which the plant of liberty is exposed for want of husbandry. He says that the cause of liberty is by no means sure, even among us; that though we have sheathed the sword, and must look into far distant years for the blood that once reddened and the fire that once glared on the fair landscape which we enjoy, and which now deform the face of thrice injured, long suffering Poland, yet we have still many moral enemies to vanquish, many obstacles to tear up and remove, which impede the passage of our system to that perfection of which it is capable, and for which it was designed.

He then enumerates and partly describes these obstacles. The first is a veneration for antiquity. On this subject his views are broad, comprehensive and statesman-like, and forcibly.

eloquently expressed. He appeals to history for what antiquity was, and what it has left, and asks why we, who owe it nothing, at least in politics, should pay it homage? Why we, who profess to love our institutions because we deem them beneficial, should respect any others because they are *old*? The question is indeed startling to timid minds, who reject or prefer without knowing why, but presents no difficulties to the bold and independent and practical, whose only standard is that *utility*, that ultimate, final utility, which results in the glory of God through the happiness of man. This false principle of veneration for antiquity, carried out in physics, would lead to the cultivation of the *bohon upas*, and the propagation of tigers: in morals, to the inculcation of murder, robbery and fraud: in politics, to despotism and oppression; in religion, to denying the Lord God Omnipotent; for poisons, beasts of prey, individual crime, tyranny and atheism are as old as the physical and moral creation of which man is a portion. Things are to be sought and cherished because they are useful, and not because they are old; and as a corollary, our political system would as much deserve our respect as the creation of yesterday, as if it were coeval with the sun.

In his appeal to history, he shows how Europe has drifted down the tide of eighteen centuries, reeling, plunging, whirling, destitute of pilot, rudder, compass or chart, without being able to reach the port which we attained in our first effort, and whence, provided we are true to ourselves, the power of winds and waves combined cannot drive us. He recounts the vicissitudes and revolutions through which she has passed from the Christian era to the present time, and shows how she missed each returning opportunity for bursting her chains, by an irrational veneration for ancient customs; and concludes by asking what perfection she has attained, that should lead us to respect her institutions, and what falsehood we discover in our own principles, that should deter us from a thorough experiment of our system? He has treated this part of his subject in a manner which proves that he has both read and thought, and that

he can comprehend the declaration of Bolinbroke, that 'history is philosophy teaching by example.'

As another obstacle to that perfection which is the end of our system, and for which it is our duty to labor, he mentions the influence of European, and particularly of English politics; and here he draws a distinction between the English and American aspirant after freedom, which is both true in fact and forcible in delineation, and shows that the shafts of European prejudices which have pierced so many heads, have recoiled harmless from his own. He describes the Englishman as stopping at a fixed line, and regarding all beyond it as chaos and obscurity; and he shows that this line is the Englishman's absolute, unalterable belief that his own political system is the essence of perfection, and that no reform or alteration could be expedient or practicable that did not recognise its leading features. The portraits are drawn with fidelity and spirit. The Englishman cannot look beyond a king, an hereditary aristocracy and an established church, or imagine that a people can be free and prosperous without them. While his sensibilities are shocked and his heart sickens and faints in beholding the miseries around him, he cannot see the cause in the radical vice of his system, though that system, under his own eyes, robs poverty of its hard-earned bread to feed the profligacy of wealth and privilege. While he sees twentyfive millions of dollars expended in a palace for a king, and twentyfive more in jewels and robes for a coronation; and at the same time sees millions of his countrymen toiling through sixteen hours of every day for a scanty subsistence, because the necessaries of life, taxed to build palaces and buy jewels, are too dear to be obtained in sufficient quantities by their labor; and while he sees an empire greater in extent than his own, and rapidly overtaking it in the march of national, as it has already surpassed it in that of social greatness, supporting a chief magistracy for less than the cost of his own king's snuff box; he still cannot imagine that a people can be *free* without the splendor of *Royalty!* He can conceive of no other freedom than that of a British subject, and of no other founda-

tion for *that* than royalty, aristocracy and hierarchy ! But the American, says Mr Otis, in his search for improvement, is spell bound by no such superstitions, or cramped and paralyzed by no such prejudices, from unravelling any usage or attacking any principle. He can try things by their practical results, and measure them by their utility, and is sure, among his countrymen, to find support where he can carry conviction. The obstacles which bound the vision and appal the heart of the Englishman as a ridge of impassable Andes, are, in the loftier aim of the American, overlooked as the molehills beneath his feet.

And yet, says Mr Otis, notwithstanding the mind of the American is free, while that of the Englishman is enthralled, the former still bows in voluntary servitude under the chains of the latter, and thus retards the march of his country to national perfection. Among the results of this foreign influence, he mentions certain defects which ought long since to have been removed, and which seem to be retained in compliment to their origin. These are, the investing our executive with a princely patronage, as if the chief magistrate of a free and honest people could not discharge his official duties without the power of corrupting ; a representation of the people by principalities and corporations, as if they derived the right of governing themselves, not from HIM who made them, but from artificial creations of their own ; imprisonment for debt, as if misfortune, the result perhaps of lightning, tempest, earthquake or pestilence, were a crime ; personal asperity in political contests, which obscures truth and tramples upon candor, as if differences of opinion, necessarily resulting from the different operations of evidence upon different minds, were just cause for a war of extermination.

He then mentions the influence of English law as another obstacle to national perfection. The fundamental principles of the English Common Law are indeed a strong and wide spreading shelter to political freedom, but the system contains many defects which require the axe of reform, and which

would long since have been cloven down, had they not been spared by the influence of foreign opinions. But, says he, the day of reform has come, even in the country which produced the abuses, and the steel is wielded, even by a disciple of the system. Let us hope that America, whom no superstitions should affright, and who should not heed the fluttering and hooting of the bats and owls which she dislodges, may not be surpassed by the Lord Chancellor of a monarchy in efforts to clear the noble tree from the withered leaves and rotten branches, the moss and the ivy, which choke and overspread and cling around it, and shut out from it the light of Heaven, the refreshing dew, cooling showers and the healthful breeze.

He then mentions as another obstacle to national perfection, the influence of foreign literature and manners. Here he rises in a bolder flight, and in a spirit of manly, lofty indignation in behalf of outraged freedom and insulted virtue, pours forth a blast of scorching sarcasm upon the attempts of the European aristocracy to *write* the world into an acknowledgment of their divine right to govern it, and of withering rebuke of the crimes by which they have for ages deformed, and are still deforming and poisoning the social system. He then calls upon his countrymen to frown down all similarity to them, and to lock up their own doors against the intrusion of their foul presence and corrupting example. He concludes by calling upon his countrymen to aim at national perfection; and to aim at it by discarding prejudices and exploding theories that will not endure examination, by laying waste with the sword of reform, tempered in their consciences, by burning with the fire of public opinion, kindled in their hearts, and by rearing the edifice of public liberty upon the broad and deep foundations of religion and morality. And he does not mean the religion of the State: but the religion which teaches that liberty was given to man as the means of promoting his own happiness and his MAKER'S glory.

Such is a brief and imperfect sketch of this oration; and whoever can rise from reading it without respect for the feel-

ings that seem to have moved the writer, will not be envied for his own by the enlightened and the liberal.

This oration is not faultless ; and to have expected perfection in a first essay upon such an occasion, would have been unreasonable. In some few sentences a defective arrangement throws doubt upon the application of particular words to their context, but without obscuring the sense of the whole. Demonstrative pronouns are sometimes introduced without a previous mention of the noun to which they refer, though even in these instances, such nouns are plainly indicated in sense. In some sentences too many circumstances are crowded, and in others the intervention of such circumstances suspends too long the connexion between the nominative case and the verb. But the orator exhibits no instances of grammar fundamentally false ; no sentence or part of a sentence defective in the essentials of agent, action and object, or nominative, verb and objective. The actor, the doing, and the thing done, are always plainly indicated. But such habits of composition are easily corrected by practice or attention. If the positions be tenable or well maintained, the delineations striking, the illustrations appropriate and clear, and the arrangement methodical, a few verbal errors may be pardoned. If the crop be vigorous, abundant and wholesome, it should not be rejected because a few weeds grow up with it. The soil is fertile, and may in future be cultivated more carefully.

It might have been expected that in a city which has been denominated the 'Literary Emporium,' such a performance would have been received with approbation, or at least would have escaped severe and violent censure ; for it sets forth with the dignity of truth and the ardor of sincerity, the principles which, in England, tore up oppression by the roots and sent a tyrant to punishment ; which led our fathers across the stormy ocean to the snow-bound rock of Plymouth, to rear amid wintry blasts, savage beasts and more savage men, the edifice under which *we* live and prosper, and which is a beacon that shall guide to a haven of rest the oppressed of other climes. The

sneers of envy and the carplings of malignity were to be expected, for they are the price which merit must pay. But as they are cowardly demons, they were expected to squint and growl from between the foul columns of some manufactory of weekly slander and profligacy, without attempting to carry public opinion by storm. But this expectation, so reasonable in a community where the majority knows or ought to know the difference between pure gold and base metal, has not been fulfilled; for a pamphlet has appeared in the shape of a review, in which the axe of *reform* is applied to the oration in a manner that indicates less a design of *pruning* than cutting up by the roots.

The critic begins by accusing the orator of seeking to please his hearers, rather than to utter his own opinions and feelings; compares him to the ass in the fable, which, by attempting to imitate the little dog and fawn upon his master, ran into very ridiculous excesses; and then pronounces him an ass in plain terms. To attack an author's positions by applying to him opprobrious epithets, though common among critics of a certain class, is neither very candid nor very polite. It has not even the merit of *coarseness*, but belongs to the level of mere *vulgarity*. The orator may be an *ass*; but whoever, in a criticism intended for the eye of a decent community, should pronounce him so in terms, cannot expect to be called a *gentleman*.

The critic says that he assumes his pen to vindicate the young men of Boston from being judged, in taste and understanding, by such a standard as this oration. But let the critic be quoted; for his own language only can do him justice.

'I fear that, in the instance of the oration before the young men of Boston, there must have been some such mistake; for God forbid, that the taste or understandings of the young men themselves, should be measured by any such standard. Any one, who shall judge the young men of Boston, by the printed speech, put forth by their orator, will do them grievous injustice. It is in their behalf, it is to vindicate them, that I have taken pen in hand. The oration itself is too silly and absurd, to merit anything more than silent contempt; to the folly of speaking such a speech, were no one but himself concerned, the orator might have added, with impunity, the folly of

printing it:— who would take the trouble to gainsay him? But, in the present case, the young men of Boston are implicated. Unless some public protest be made against it, the community will, naturally enough, regard them as the god-fathers of this offspring of imbecility; their reputation of common sense is at a stake; their character demands the sacrifice: and the ink of criticism must flow.' p. 4.

Whoever should estimate the young men of Boston by this review, would do them grievous injustice. But to this the reviewer has exposed them. He has stepped forth as their champion and assumed to speak as their authorized agent, to vindicate them from the charge of having sanctioned such a publication as the oration of Mr Otis; and unless some public protest be made against his assumption, the community may possibly, though not, to use his own phrase, *naturally enough*, regard these young men as the reviewer's constituents and the god-fathers of his performance. 'Their character is at stake, and the ink of criticism must flow;' for though they may not lightly be suspected of choosing such an agent, yet, concerning some offences, *suspicion* must not be tolerated and the *appearance* of evil must be avoided.

In the following terms, he complains of the general tone and spirit of the oration.

'I will begin with a few remarks on the general tone of the oration. Its whole spirit is so bitter, sour and crabbed, it overflows with such malignant contempt of every body and everything;— the orator delights so much in abusing all the past and all the present; dwells with such evident pleasure on "national absurdities, political nuisances, and public abominations;" and speaks with such gusto of "the fatal virus of political corruption," that, whatever other blunders he may have made, he certainly shows a good deal of skill, in concluding his oration with the words, "unutterable ruin;"— which two words may indeed be looked upon, as a recapitulation of the whole speech, as a sort of index, echo, and chorus, to the whole six and thirty pages.' pp. 5, 6.

Should a tenant of our State Prison taunt his associates with crime, or the majesty of darkness complain of his imps for smelling of sulphur, the ludicrous would not be more apparent than it is in this courteous and amiable critic's complaint of the orator's bitterness.

That part of the oration which comprizes a review of Europe from the commencement of the Christian era, is noticed in the following manner.

‘It was the judicious advice of an old preacher to a young preacher, “never to raise the devil for the sake of laying him again.” This excellent precept seems never to have reached the ears of the young men’s orator; for he goes ranging like a madman, through all ages and nations, conjuring up the direst phantoms, in the shape of Romans, Goths, popes, priests, feudal chieftains, astrologers, alchemists, venetian merchants, moors, mahometans, huns, normans, cathedrals, siefs, castles, benefices, kings, nobles, Lord Byron, the author of Paul Clifford, principalities, dukedoms, counties, rotten boroughs, and Heaven knows what besides, and is at great pains and expense to transport them all the way across the Atlantic, for no other earthly reason, so far as appears, except to show his skill at exorcising and abuse.’
pp. 7, 8.

The substance of his remarks upon this part of the oration, which comprehends no less than seventeen pages, are that the orator has disregarded the advice of an old preacher to a young preacher, never to raise the devil for the sake of laying him again; and that he has used, in the course of these seventeen pages, twentyfive nouns, which the critic has arranged successively. No position of the orator is controverted, no fact disputed, no assertion doubted, no principle or sentiment opposed. All is admitted. This critic is indeed a formidable adversary, and the literary community may justly dread his denunciations. If any one should criticise this passage of the review by saying that the reviewer has conjured up the direst phantoms in the shape of old preachers, young preachers, the devil, excellent precepts, ears, young men’s orator, madman, ages, nations, ‘and Heaven knows what besides,’ he would merely follow the reviewer’s example. In a note to this paragraph of *unparalleled criticism*, he asks if the orator ever read Paul Clifford, and for the purpose of raising a doubt upon the point, says that Regent street is not mentioned in the work, and that instead of being a defence of the nobility, it is a very bitter satire upon them. The orator has not affirmed that Regent street is mentioned in Paul Clifford, a fact in no other manner important than as showing the critical accuracy of the reviewer. The orator’s only mention of Regent street is the following:

'Why should we summon from their blest abodes the shades of Sidney and of Junius, if Regent street can usher from her Athenian club-rooms the master spirits of Pelham and Paul Clifford?' p. 30.

This means, if plain English be intelligible, that such characters as form the heroes of Bulwer's corrupting novels, figure in the club-rooms of the nobility, which are held in that part of London. The critic says in the same note that Paul Clifford is a satire upon the nobility. This may be true, and the orator has not denied it. But if true, it is that species of satire which is more corrupting than the most elaborate panegyric; for in the latter, the object of the writer would be apparent, and readers would assume an attitude of resistance, while in the former, by professing to condemn, he invites examination, assured that most readers will be captivated and seduced by his pictures. The Beggar's Opera was a satire upon robbers, thieves and other disciples of infamy. Yet so alluring were its scenes, that it inspired half the youth of London of both sexes with a desire of becoming Mac Heaths and Pollies. Fielding and Smollett, though doubtless intending to satirise vice, have woven so much of it into the characters of their heroes, as to render their Tom Joneses and Roderic Rands very corrupting characters.

The critic then condemns the orator for '*belaboring*' the European nobility, and cites the following passage as proof of his want of candor.

'Nothing has ever blackened the human heart, and seared the conscience more irretrievably than the manners of European high life. Their errors, follies and violences have signalized other ages; this, they have blighted with the mildew of cold, contemptuous selfishness. Their wealth and privileges must be supported, if the laws are warped. Their luxury must be pampered if the country mourns; they succeed if by subtlety; they triumph if by treachery; adroit in policy, cunning in ambition, they maintain their own preeminence, and sooner than relinquish the extortions of their birthright, they would sprinkle their palace floors with the blood of the provinces, and wash them with the tears of their own poor.'

Does the critic deny the truth of this description? No; for that would be too bold an experiment upon the supposed ig-

norance of his readers. Such, at least, were the French nobility in the days of the revolution of 1789, and their being such was one cause of their suffering that terrible visitation. Should we seek the character of the British nobility in the present condition of the country which they have long ruled; should we estimate them by the appalling misery that for years has been accumulating around them; should we search the judicial records of their country for the black list of their seductions and adulteries; should we follow them to horse-races, boxing-matches and gaming-houses, and behold the frightful extent of their profligacy; should we notice their late active exertions and enormous contributions to prevent reform, and the alacrity and unanimity with which the people, wherever permitted to speak or act, have encountered and routed them; we might be prepared to pronounce them no better than the French nobility of 1789, and to say with the orator that 'their luxury must be pampered if the country mourns, and that sooner than relinquish the extorions of their birthright, they would sprinkle their palace floors with the blood of the provinces, and wash them with the tears of their own poor.'

The critic complains of the following passage as a specimen of what are denominated mixed metaphors.

'We should be slow to attribute the imperfections which deform our system, to the system itself. There is no fault in the design; no defect in the construction; the site is well chosen; the materials at hand, and all that is requisite to insure to our country a continual career of prosperity, an unfading vigor, an ever renovating youth, is a determination to eradicate the obstructions in the road, to tear down the antiquated scaffoldings, to abandon the miserable tools and cumbrous machinery, with which it has been surrounded, and with the strong arm of the people, to go to work.' p. 11.

According to the critic's analysis of this passage, our system is first, an unfinished building, then a race-horse, then a youth of unfading vigor, next, a go-cart with its road obstructed, and then an unfinished building again. As a specimen of confusion of ideas, this criticism far exceeds any example of mixed metaphors which the orator would probably ever offer. Mr Otis first describes our *political system* as an edifice, and afterwards

our country as moving in a career of prosperity. They are very different things. The latter could exist as *our country* without the former, and before the revolution, *did* exist as *our country* under a very different system. Besides, we consider the system as one of our means or instruments for promoting the prosperity of *our country*. A merchant may thrive by industry, frugality, and order in business. These are among his means. Will the critic pretend that this industry, or frugality, or order, is the merchant himself? New England is prospering under the manufacturing system. Will he say that a body of laws for encouraging American industry is the six States of New England? This sentence of the oration contains *two distinct metaphors*, and not *one* compounded of qualities belonging to different things; and is not therefore an example of mixed metaphor. Neither is it one of accumulated metaphor, a figure by which a thing is represented by one object, as an edifice, and immediately afterwards by another, as a race-horse, without any mixing or confounding of the two by predicating of one the qualities of the other. The two metaphors in the sentence are distinct, and their distinction is preserved; and he has represented by them two different things, which are kept distinct also. Our political system is represented by an unfinished edifice, with no fault in the design, no defect in the construction, with a site well chosen and materials at hand. Our country is represented by a racer, whether man or horse must depend on the taste of the reader. The orator then says that to insure to this racer a continual career of success, an unfading vigor, an ever renovating youth, the obstructions in the road to the edifice must be removed, and the useless scaffoldings, tools and machinery around it abandoned. Where is the confusion? The reader may ask how the horse, if this racer be one, could be aided in his career or supplied with unfading vigor by the completion of this building? Supposing him to be a horse, the edifice might be the stable where he was reared and fed and trained for the course; and if a stable with arrangements incomplete had been sufficient to produce such a

courser, a continuance of his vigor might be expected, after the completion of these arrangements would afford in a more perfect manner, the feeding and training which first produced it. If the reader suppose the racer to be a man, he is only to consider the building as a human habitation, and apply to both a train of reasoning similar to that which has been applied to the horse and the stable.

The critic then says that the system, after being successively a building, a race-horse and a youth, becomes 'a go-cart with its road obstructed.' What he intends by a 'go-cart' may be obscure to most readers. Webster defines go-cart to be an instrument for teaching children to *walk*; a definition that excludes the idea of a vehicle for transportation upon the highway. But the orator introduces no vehicle as a representation of our political system. Throughout the passage, this system is a building, to which easier access is to be obtained by removing obstructions from the road leading to it. Neither does he change his image from a race-horse to a young man. This image, by which *the country* is represented, and not its *political system*, is a racer, and continually the same in both genus and species. As the orator has designated neither the genus nor species, but left the selection to the reader, the critic has no authority for pronouncing it a horse more than a man, and certainly none for changing it from one to the other. The critic supposes it a horse, because it is moving in a *career*. But can this term be applied to the motion of no other animal? He then supposes it a man, because it is to be endued with ever renovating youth. Cannot he predicate youth of a horse, or imagine *unfading* youth of a horse as well as a man? Why cannot he suppose it a man throughout, since where genus or species is not designated, the reader may select the most dignified? Did he never hear of foot-races among men? They are common, even in New England, and were certainly known to the ancients; for Homer, in the twentythird book of the *Iliad*, has described one that was signalized by a remarkable accident. Should the reviewer seek a parallel to his own race

on the course of criticism, he is referred to that of Edmund Curl in the *Dunciad*; for the vulgarities into which he fell in the very outset of his review, seem to have inspired him with powers sufficient for beating any competitor in the race of scurrility.*

He quotes the following passage as one to which Lindley Murray would except.

‘But when we reflect that the essential, the peculiar principle of this happy country, the principle that all power resides in the people, emanates from the people, and is responsible to the people; that this principle, when at the very acme of its triumph, at the full tide of its glory, after its long, its prosperous, its unparalleled career, should be confronted, doubted, and denied even here, where we have ocular proof and continual demonstration of its benefit and efficacy, it needs no augury to pronounce an hour, or even this day, inauspicious for mere exultation.’

p. 6.

Where is the error in grammar? The critic designates none, and a grammarian could find none. The arrangement might have been better, and the repetition of the nominative case *principle* to the verb *should be confronted* might and should have been avoided. The sentence is not elegant, but is perfectly grammatical. To the nominative case *principle* in the first part of the sentence, is appended a *description* which separates the noun, for a short space, from its verb *should be* &c; which separation requires a repetition of the noun. The practice, though inelegant, is common, and instances of it may be found in long sentences, in the best writers.

The critic quotes as a subject of censure, the following sentence.

‘To what eminence would she (Europe) not have attained, had her youth looked forward to futurity, unblinded by a superstitious veneration for established institutions: had they disregarded the watch-words “church and king,” rejected the collars of nobility, spurned their golden coronets, and jewelled stars, and aimed boldly at the good of the people, and the amelioration of the world?’

p. 14.

His remarks upon this are the following.

‘After a little more preliminary flourish, the orator goes on to trace the history of Europe, from the christian era; — for at that period he seems to think the history of Europe begins, never having heard, I

* *Dunciad*. Book II, line 51—108.

suppose, of the Roman republic, or the Grecian commonwealths. But seriously, I should like to be informed, if it can be possible that this young men's orator, has yet to learn, that the change from republican freedom to imperial servitude took place at Rome, not out of a "superstitious veneration for established institutions," but by the arts of Julius Cæsar, who began by being a demagogue, and so overturning the old institutions, and ended by being a tyrant, and building up an empire on the ruins of the republic?' pp. 12, 13.

The position of the orator is that Europe, at each returning opportunity for bursting her chains, lost it by a superstitious veneration for ancient institutions. Is this erroneous? Does not history prove it? The critic says that Julius Cæsar destroyed the republic and built an empire on its ruins, by *overturning* the old institutions! The transactions of Cæsar's time have hitherto been involved in impenetrable darkness, and the world is greatly indebted to this critic for shedding light upon them! Cæsar overturned *none* of the old institutions, but *preserved* them, and made them the instruments of his power. They were well suited to his purpose, for they were institutions under which liberty had never been able to boast of more than a sickly existence, and under which she had expired long before Cæsar's time. Had Cæsar sought supreme power by trampling upon old institutions and old prejudices, he might have alarmed the jealousies of the Roman people of all classes, and thus have defeated his design. He was more politic. He saw that in pursuing shadows, they overlooked substances, and by flattering their prejudices in favor of the shadows, he succeeded in ruling them with absolute authority. This period afforded to the Romans a glorious opportunity for establishing liberty on broader and deeper foundations. All their generals, who were as mischievous as the generals of South America at the present day, had been swept away excepting one, and this one would not, probably, have found even the army a willing instrument in an open attempt to establish despotism. They had merely to tear down and clear away the aristocratic rubbish which had rendered Rome a theatre of continual strife between its nobility and rabble, and to build up anew upon different plans. But no! they

had no views of government beyond their complicated, ill joined and rotten system, as the Englishman has none beyond his king, nobility and church. They lost their opportunity, as the English lost that of confirming their own freedom after the death of Oliver Cromwell. The Romans retained their old machinery of nobility and senate and consuls and tribunes and state religion and chief pontiffs and dictators and perpetual dictators, and became the slaves of an emperor. The English, by retaining the principle of hereditary succession in the appointment of Richard Cromwell, which was the radical vice of their old system, became the slaves of the Stuarts first, and of an oligarchy afterwards. Heaven save the French from a similar fate ! to which they have exposed themselves by retaining the trappings of kings and nobles.

The critic proceeds.

‘Can this young men’s orator possibly be so ignorant as not to know, that the Romans for a long time after the establishment of the empire, held to the perfect equality of all Roman citizens, “rejected the collars of nobility,” “spurned golden coronets and jewelled stars,” and held the name of king in abhorrence, bitter as that even, of the young men’s orator? And does he not know, that the idea of a privileged order of nobles, the inequalities of rank and “trappings of nobility,” were introduced into the empire, not out of any “veneration for antiquity,” but by the innovating, *reforming*, *radical*, measures of Diocletian and Constantine, in utter contempt and total disregard, of all ancient laws and prejudices?’ p. 13.

The orator is very probably ignorant of all this, or else he is acquainted with what never happened. Roman nobility is of older date than the reign of Diocletian or of Constantine, having been created by Romulus soon after the foundation of the city ! His nobles were a privileged order, of higher rank and enjoying greater powers than the rest of the community, and were divided into two classes. The first were called PATRICIANS, and had the exclusive right of sitting in the senate. The second were called EQUITES or *Knights*, and constituted the Roman cavalry. These two bodies were hereditary and very wealthy, particularly the first, who sometimes owned most of the landed property in the republic ; and by their oppressions,

they caused those dissensions between themselves and the PLEBEIANS or *common people*, which rendered Rome in the days of the Republic, a scene of incessant tumult and bloodshed. Neither are the trappings, the 'collars,' the 'jewelled stars,' and other badges of superior rank and power, of a date so modern as this critic ascribes to them; for the Patricians and Knights were distinguished by particular garbs and insignia, and the former especially wore crescents or half-moons in their shoes.

The critic continues.

'Is this young men's orator, so ridiculously ignorant as not to know, that the "watchwords," as he calls them, of "church and king," were first heard within the last two hundred years, and were never heard at all, at least as a party signal, out of the limits of Great Britain and Ireland? Does he not know, that this English tory signal, would be as unintelligible to an old Roman, could we call one from the grave, to a chieftain of the middle ages, or to a Russian or Polish nobleman of our own times, -- as unintelligible even, as this young men's oration itself?'
p. 13.

Did the orator mean to say that the two plain English words *church* and *king* had been watchwords in all parts of Europe, in all times, for rallying the adherents of arbitrary power, he would certainly have been in the wrong; for the *old Romans* did not understand modern English, and it would not probably have been intelligible to a French, a German, or an Italian aristocrat of the middle ages. But that words denoting the ideas expressed by the English words *church* and *king*, were used, according to the vernacular of each country, as war cries to summon the nobles and priests whenever their privileges were thought to be in danger, is as certainly true. These same *old Romans* had a state religion, and most grievously did they persecute the inoffensive Christians in defence of it; and the pretext for the persecution was that the Christians plotted, not only against the established religion, but against the government. Nor were the Christians the only sufferers for the safety of the *old Roman church*; for the Druids of Britain were tortured and murdered by order of the PONTIFEX MAXIMUS, to promote the glory of THE IMMORTAL GODS. To go a little farther back,

the *old Greeks*; aye! the enlightened, the *free*, the *republican* Athenians, murdered Socrates according to law, upon a charge of plotting against the established religion. The efficacy of these terms in catholic Europe, from the end of the Roman empire to the French revolution, and even in some parts of it since, will abundantly appear from almost any page of any modern historian. What the critic supposes to have been confined, as a party signal, to Great Britain and Ireland, has been heard in all countries in which hierarchies and oligarchies have been found, and the signal has varied in form only with the difference of languages; the trumpeters exclaiming *church and king* in England; *Le Roi et l'église*, in France; *La santa Iglesia y el Rey*, in Spain; *Dunder und blixen*, in Holland; *Long fong te ko*, or something like it, in China, and 'Heaven knows what,' in Japan. *

The critic selects for condemnation the following passage.

'For three centuries after the birth of our Saviour, Rome, the mistress of Europe, exhibited at once, the most ignominious depravity, the most brilliant literary excellence, and the highest political grandeur. Nation after nation was successively reduced to her sway, and captive kings followed the triumphant chariots of her generals, through crowds of adoring people, and poured out the riches of their distant dominions into her insatiable treasury.' p. 15.

Upon this he comments in the following terms.

'Now Niebuhr is nothing to this. The discoveries he has made or pretends to have made, in Roman history, are like dust in the balance compared with this splendid discovery of the young men's orator. It always had been supposed hitherto, that all the brilliant Roman conquests were achieved before the commencement of the christian era. There is a fellow, one Edward Gibbon, no doubt totally beneath the notice of the young men's orator, who undertakes to say upon the authority of a parcel of old, antiquated Latin and Greek historians, that beside the province of Britain, and Trajan's transient conquests in Dacia, the emperors added nothing to the extent of the empire. But no doubt this is all a mistake; and I suppose the young men's orator has some learned work in the press, in which he intends to confute all previous writers on this interesting subject, and to introduce a radical reform into history.'

Unfortunately for the critic, Niebuhr carries his Roman history no later than to the beginning of the reign of Augustus, and says nothing about what transpired after the Christian era, which

did not commence till near the close of that Emperor's reign. Most of the Roman conquests were indeed made in the days of the Republic; yet Gibbon mentions some of no little magnitude that were achieved in those of the Empire. Besides Britain, the conquest of which had been merely begun in the reign of Claudius, many and great conquests had been made. According to Gibbon, who writes 'upon the authority of a parcel of *old antiquated!* Latin and Greek historians, Trajan subdued not only Dacia, but a large portion of Asia, comprehending the countries of Bosphorus, Colchos, Iberia, Albania, Osrhene, Parthia, Media, Carduchia, Armenia, Mesopotamia and Assyria. These Eastern conquests were indeed abandoned by Adrian, not because he was unable to retain them, but because his moderation and love of peace exceeded those of his predecessor. Still they were achieved; which would have justified the orator in saying that extensive conquests were made by the Empire in the first three centuries of the Christian era. But he says no such thing. The substance of his remarks is that, in the first three centuries, the power and depravity and literary progress of Rome surpassed those of any former period. In this the orator is correct. Down to the death of Constantine in 337, the Empire had lost none of its acquisitions, and all the combinations of the surrounding nations against it, formidable and occasionally successful as they were, had been defeated. The causes of decline had indeed begun to operate about the time of the elder Antoninus, but had not produced their full effects, and actually put the Empire in motion in its downward and headlong course, till after the removal of the seat of government from Rome to Byzantium by Constantine. If the critic entertains any doubt about the depth of Roman depravity in the course of these three centuries, let him study the history of Nero in the writings of his friend Petronius, the reigns of Vitellius, Domitian, Commodus and Heliogabalus, and the satires of Juvenal, who wrote in the reign of Trajan, and then ask himself if human nature could sink deeper? The critic asks how many writers of the third century the orator knows even by name, and asks it for the purpose of accusing him of having pronounced that cen-

ture the period of the greatest literary advancement in Rome. But the orator makes no allusion to the literature of the third century particularly, but says in substance that Roman literature was most conspicuous within this period of three centuries. The orator would be sustained in this, though this literary excellence were confined to a short period of the first century, and were utterly extinguished before the commencement of the second or third. He has merely assumed a period during which three things were most conspicuous, power, depravity and literature, and without designating the time at which each was greatest in the course of this period. Now the reign of Augustus, in the course of which Christ was born, is well known to scholars as the excelling period of Roman literature, and as having furnished an epithet for denoting the same period in other countries. Thus the reign of Louis XIV. is called the *Augustan* age of France, and that of Anne, the *Augustan* age of England. Though the literature of the Empire declined after this period, still enough remained to dignify the second century at least, as appears from the writings of the younger Pliny, Juvenal, Plutarch, Tacitus and many others. Plutarch indeed wrote in Greek, but his works belong to the literature of the Empire. Such are the critic's historical discoveries among the *old ancients*, as he calls them!

The critic finds fault with the orator's chronology, by accusing him of calling Bacon, Gallileo and Des Cartes the predecessors of Henry VIII. and Charles V. The orator has not said this. He briefly reviews in a single paragraph, a period of European history beginning with the accession of Henry VIII. in 1509, and ending with that of Charles I. in 1625; in which paragraph he mentions the three philosophers, but without stating the particular portion of the period in which either of them flourished. Bacon was born in 1561, Gallileo in 1564, and Des Cartes in 1596; consequently the first saw the light sixtyfour years, the second sixtyone years, and the third twentynine years before the accession of Charles I. Can either of them be said to have lived and flourished during any portion of this period? Before the critic shall again ironically invoke the shades of Usher, Newton and Petau, he would do well to repair his own chronology.

The critic ends with a denunciation of the orator as a pupil of 'Fanny Wright,' or of some 'hoary demagogue.' What warrant can be found in the oration for charging the author with Atheistical or Jacobinical principles, is not easily discoverable; since Miss Wright, so far as her views are intelligible, aims a blow at the foundations of human society, by denying the source of religious obligation, and attacking the sanctity of marriage; while the orator would build his social system upon the solid foundations of religion and morality, of reverence for God and love for man. Had he uttered anything bearing the semblance of Jacobinism, he would merit severe reproof, for nothing can be more revolting to good men than that moral poison, whether it be of French or English growth. The French Jacobin is a fiend, the English a brute; the first works by corruption, the second by violence. The first is perhaps the most dangerous because the most enlightened. He endues his disciples with human learning, but, demon-like, converts that learning into an engine of mischief. By bounding the views of man to earth, and teaching that his aspirations after something better beyond it are illusory, he makes the vices of the passions the business of life, and to favor their indulgence, excites, developes, trains, disciplines and sets in operation the vices of the heart. The English Jacobin, or leveller, is a beast of prey and nothing more. Believing the benefits of the social system to be unequally distributed, he would restore the balance, not by raising himself to a higher mark in the scale, but by bringing others down to his own. Oppression may have made him what he is; but until instruction shall convert him to something better, the management of the social system should not be committed to his hands.

That the orator would save the country from both, from blighting wickedness and desolating violence, is plainly indicated in some parts of his performance. Let him go on; let him strive to carry his principles into operation, disregarding alike the clamors of ignorance and the sneers of envy, and a just and enlightened public will exclaim,

Macte animi, generose puer!

The reviewer's *criticisms* being disposed of, a few words will be offered upon the manner of his own performance; for since he is careful 'to remember that in the realm of criticism, all old-fashioned and antiquated notions of rank and distinction have long since been done away,' he must not expect to shelter himself beneath the immunities of any 'privileged class.' Allusion has already been made to his pronouncing the orator in terms an 'ass.' It would be well now to notice the equal urbanity of styling him 'a madman,' 'a post of wood,' 'a political wet-nurse, stuffing our mouths with pap,' 'a man of straw,' 'an unfledged disciple,' 'a new-hatched duckling,' something that 'froths and fumes away with all the spirit of a bottle of ginger beer.' Falstaff must have been listening to this when he exclaimed, 'I would thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought:' The critic speaks of the performance as something 'which bears upon its face marks of utter folly;' as being 'such a soft and shapeless mass, that one hardly knows how or where to take hold of it;' as a 'screech-owl note;' as 'wretched stuff.' Here again the fat knight might exclaim, 'Hal! thou hast the most unsavory similes:' — He also says that 'the orator has studied at the feet of some hoary demagogue.' Is the allusion to our worthy mayor? for the orator is not known to have been brought up at the feet of any one else. However the critic may dissent from the father's politics, past or present, for the term *demagogue* implies a political allusion, he would do greater credit to his own courtesy by signifying his disapprobation in milder terms. To pronounce the father a 'hoary demagogue,' and the son an 'ass,' in the compass of sixteen short pages, would seem a critical visitation sufficient for one family. He cannot differ wider from the one in politics or the other in historical accuracy, than from both in urbanity. After having exhibited such specimens of politeness and elegant diction, the critic has given to society a claim for renewed exertions of his uncommon talents. He should be required to publish, for the further edification of the young men of Boston, rules for good behaviour and fine writing.

But his manners are not his only merit. In page 6th of the Review, he uses the expression '*start naked.*' The lovers of pure English may well *start* at the *nakedness* of the critic's philology. 'That tyrannical old aristocrat,' Horne Tooke, spells it *stark*, derives it from the Anglo-Saxon *starc*, says it is a good English word, and means *strong, full, mere, plain*; the two last of which definitions show the propriety of the word when applied to entire nakedness. In page 9th he says 'pretty much at hap-hazzard.' *Pretty much*, like *belaboring*, is an elegance, a refinement of phraseology, which can probably be found in few, if any standard English authors; *hap-hazard* is perhaps equally rare, though Webster has given it a place in his great catalogue of pure English and anomalous corruptions; but this double fortified spelling of *hazard* with a double *z*, is a bolder flight towards orthographical difficulties than any modern lexicographer has attempted. In the same page is found 'et cetera, et cetera.' If the critic understand Latin, the mistake is ludicrous; if he do not, his pretension is equally so. Scholars write *cætera*, and are so directed by those 'tyrannical old aristocrats,' Cicero, Livy, Sallust, and many others, *too numerous to be particularly mentioned in this advertisement.* It may be well to inquire, in passing, upon what authority the critic writes the French philosopher's name, Des Cartes. Scholars usually write it Des Cartes, and upon the authority of some French authors, who probably had a smattering of their mother tongue. The world cannot sufficiently admire the *enterprise* that should induce one to set up for an *arbiter literarum*, with no greater stock in trade!

'But I am tired of pointing out errors and exposing absurdities.' Let the critic reform his temper, reform his manners, reform his style, reform his taste, reform his orthography, reform his philology, reform his logic, reform his knowledge of history, reform his candor, reform his mode of stating facts, and it will then be full time for him to undertake to reform the writings of others.