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To Our Readers: Review of President Dew's Address

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TO OUR READERS.

"REVIEW OF PRESIDENT DAV'S ADDRESS."

We received with gratitude, and published with pleasure and approbation, the article, the name of which is prefixed to this. We admired the chaste style, the classic taste and the gentlemanly spirit that characterize it. But we do not assert to all its merits. We commend the chaste style, the classic taste, and the gentle example on which he has relied, and will take the pleasure in the same spirit in which his own was conceived.

His criticisms are addressed first to the style, and then to the matter of his author. We shall take him up in the same order, and in doing this we are happy to say that his style we have nothing to object. It is clear, simple, chaste and graceful. The author of that review can ask no higher praise than this. It will certainly satisfy all his canon of criticisms in regard to mere style. It satisfies ours too. We may say more (though not truly), which might sound like praise to some, but to him, and in our estimation, it would not be praise.

But we feel ourselves bound to throw our leg over Mr. Dew; though in doing this we may lose here the heat of abilities, yet we doubt not to screen him securely from any such which may be aimed at the head or the heart. We therefore at once confess that there are some inaccuracies of style which we shall not attempt to defend. What there are will be understood by referring to the review. It is needless to specify them. They will be distinguished by not being made the subjects of any remarks by us.

We entirely agree with the reviewer that the usage of good writers is the only standard by which the English language is to be ascertained. But we perhaps differ from him in the manner of applying this standard. Our language is the subject of continual secretion, and from age to age (indeed from year to year) is enriched by the addition of new words and new combinations. To the authors of these we are certainly deeply indebted, and we shall continue to incur fresh debts, as often as any one shall contribute to our facilities of giving clearer, freer, pleasanter and more expressive of our thoughts. But how can these valuable contributions go on, if they who offer them are considered as forfeiting by the very act, their place among those good writers whose compositions are to be taken as standards of language?

The effect of this must be to stop all further improvement. But does the language admit of none? Say that it does not. What then? There was a time when it did; and the law of language was the same then as now. How happens it then that so much has been added to it, in defiance of this supposed law, and that they who have furnished the additions have been honored and rewarded? While such as, at this day, follow their example, are to be censured?

With due submission we reserve a solution of this question, which will at once vindicate all contributors, past, present and future, whose suggestions of words or phrases may addle the text we shall present.

We will say then that the English language consists actually of all the words found in our dictionaries, and that in all our standards, whether other words are admitted, or not, much other vocabulary, much other usage, or convenience may suggest the use of, and in the formation of which certain conditions are observed. It might favor of pedantry to speak of these; and it is not our object to specify them all. But a few examples will illustrate our meaning.

The adjective indicates a quality, which it predicates of the noun substantive. Now this quality, by or might be a noun. Sometimes that name is made the root of the adjective, and sometimes it is derived from it. Now we do not scruple to say that if there be an adjective and noun expressive of quality which that adjective predicates of its adjacent noun, it is lawful to make such a name. If we had such a word in any book as "pedantry," the use of the word would be perfectly legal. Again, it may happen, that although there is a noun expressive of the generic quality predicated by an adjective derived from it, if any modification of that quality were found unprovided with its appropriate word, it would be quite right to form one from the adjective. Thus, if we had the word "joyous," belonging to the whole family of pleasures, the formation of "joy-ous-ness" would be as legitimate as the use of the generic word just.

In the exercise of this privilege we will suggest one rule which is sometimes overlooked, and produces results unpleasing to the classical taste. It is this—that whether the radical which is proposed to expand into a new word is of Saxon or of Latin origin, the increment which it supplied should be chosen in conformity to the genius of the language from which the word is derived. If this rule be uniformly observed, the innovator may rest assured that the new word thus grafted on the old stock of classical language will become a part of it. Thus, if we suppose that we had no word to express "badness," in any of its modes, we should adopt that word, and also "miseducation," by which he also condemns. Why should not such words be used? Can their meaning be mistaken? Is not their formation in perfect harmony with the rules and genius of the language? Have they not equivalent words to indicate Mr. Dew in any of the cases to which all his readers are familiar? How should we be obliged to use such a word as "influence," which came to us from the Latin phrase "auctoritas," etc., according to the Latin formula? To come now to the point in controversy: We maintain that, as a general rule, it is lawful to use most nouns verbatim, putting little and often no change in their form. Hence, if the word "succeed," which is used as a participle, were not to be found in any book on earth, such use would be perfectly legitimate. We would say the name of the verb to "succeed." It happens that both these words, which are condemned as barbarisms by the reviewer, are found in Webster; as well as the word "succeeded," which he also condemns. What is the difference? That one was less stress on the uniformity than on the principle we have stated. Why should not such words be used? Can their meaning be mistaken? Is not their formation in perfect harmony with the rules and genius of the language? Have they not equivalent words to indicate, whether born yesterday or an hundred years ago?

We would beg the reviewer to look at his text, and find in any ancient author the word "flesh" used as a verb, which was, as "be fleshed" used by Gifford in the Quarterly. Is it in any of its modes, we should adopt that word, and also "miseducation," etc., according to the Latin formula? To come now to the point in controversy: We maintain that, as a general rule, it is lawful to use most nouns verbatim, putting little and often no change in their form. Hence, if the word "succeed," which is used as a participle, were not to be found in any book on earth, such use would be perfectly legitimate. We would say the name of the verb to "succeed." It happens that both these words, which are condemned as barbarisms by the reviewer, are found in Webster; as well as the word "succeeded," which he also condemns. Why should not such words be used? Can their meaning be mistaken? Is not their formation in perfect harmony with the rules and genius of the language? Have they not equivalent words to indicate, whether born yesterday or an hundred years ago?

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sage. This very line was applied by Doctor Johnson to his hono.
stated, his Dictionary. The passage is in Boswell’s Life of
But an example is at hand of a quotation used with the hap.
est effect in a rescued career. It was in a speech of the late
Mr. Randolph, which all who heard it recited and which none can
forget. When the confidence of the opposition was claimed for
Mr. Adams, and a pledge of confidence was asked, he gave his
answer in the words of Apollo in the son of Clytemnestra—"Pig}
nera aut petis, de pugnare aut tromeundo." The fear of Apollo
was for his son. That of Mr. Randolph was of Mr. Adams. Yet
the effect of this quotation, so equalized, was electrical, and was
considered by many as one of the most felicitous examples of
Mr. R.’s fine art of praise.


Yet we cannot dismiss this philosophical discussion without showing
the language of this note is not adapted to give us the effect of
comparing the merits of verbal critics, and of blending into har
mony the conceptions of literature, and art, and science, to a
language that is happily qualified to adapt itself to all the modifica.
tions of thought which the progressive improvement of the hu.
man mind most effect.

When the reviewer, turning from the work of verbal criticism,
undertakes to examine and controvert the deceptions taught in
Mr. Dew’s address, he seems to us engaged in the unprofitable
task of trying to reconcile his advocate to himself.
He does, indeed, assay the importance of moral and political
science; and, in doing this, displays somewhat of that zeal,
which is always awakened by the manners of others against what
we approve. President Dew le avours, that in most other semi-
naries, and especially in some of those in Virginia, those stu.
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exact sciences. We do not understand him as doing more than
to contend for their equal claim to consideration. In doing this,
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truth, in favor of what the reviewer calls his favorite students,
and perhaps his favorite studies; but it is not on that account that he
spoke on their behalf. He advocated them because of their intrinsic importance, and he advocated them
in the hand of an institution where they have always par.
ticularly cherished. He knew that this had been imparted to
him as a youth, and from this impression he felt it his duty to defend her.
If any thing was wanting to make good his defence, his re.
viewer has supplied it. We beg the reviewer’s attention to the following passage:

"Among the greatest evils that has ever afflicted this com.
moneality, is the morbid desire of some for political dis.
tinction. It has ruined the hopes of many of the republic, destroying
every thing like useful enterprise in Virginia, and banishing from
the public mind the consideration of the part of our students in
the people of other states, or from the patronage of the federal
government. The only way that we can rescue them from the
mindless of learning, them, deeming themselves politicians and
statesmen, ready made according to the philosophy of the best
schools, they rush with ardor into the political arena. Excep.
tions from their ambitious aspirations, with their taste degraded,
and having lost all capacity for useful employment, they become
reckless and abandoned; or falling in with a dominant party,
they sacrifice all independence of character, and submit to the
blind, as their knowledge of knowledge is in that universe to
which they had vainly attempted to aspire. Not in this position
for a moment can they hold the confidence of the educated portion of our people.
Truly has President Dew said, in what we esteem a great pol.
itical necessary. It swarms with politicians of every age, and
hot, and size. But, unfortunately, for our state, we have a hundred demagogues. Next in a warlike array in time of
political danger is the political humble for the business of public life, is in most dangerous to the liberties of a free
state. Such men must necessarily be the enemies of the state. Considering parties as the, they must needs 
embrace the independence, the independence of the citizens of their duty as representatives of the people, they must seek it in
moral considerances, and in the imperious mandate of the people, leading, or in a course of defending servility and servility to the
opposition of federal patriotism. Let us do nothing to in.
crease this numerous swarm of hungry politicians. What we
must look for, as educators of our youth, is that we shall
instructed, not only in moral and political philosophy, but in
politics; and in literature, and especially in those physical sciences so
intimately connected with the most serious, yet the most prac-
ticable and independent of all pursuits. Such persons would be
qualified to aid in that admirable task of educating citizens and of
stimulating those of the most celebrated of the ancient Romans,
could step from their plough to the most important offi
ce, and there they themselves, their own dignity, or de.
garding the rich stations to which they might be eligible.
“If we were disposed to derive from the study of the
analysis and moral philosophy, we would have been
President Dew on the proposition which he has so boldly
stated, that ‘the great ones of high intellect, in all ages and
conditions, have been employed in morals and politics,’ and we
might appeal to the history of the world, and the testimony of
many of the wisest and best men can do no more than what
is said to be a corollary from this proposition, that the highest
intellect is necessary to political success. The truth of the re
mark of the celebrated Chancellor Ozenstein, who, with great
abilities, had the opportunity of extensive observation and ex
perience in one of the most distinguished corps of his age, has
been so universally acknowledged, that this remark has become
almost proverbial: ‘God’s not in his bow, who expressed
his design of his capacity for office.’ And, see, for yourself,
queen pura sapientia regina mundi.” The philosophical illus
tration of this shows us, that we have presented.

That to lie the subject is line of great interest. We will respec.
tfully request those who preside over the magistracy of our coun
try to consider well of the means we have presented.

In the very plant in question, we can, or one which we cannot administer? Is it for mere schoolmen to correct “the world’s desire of dis
tinction” marred by our institutions? “The democratic re
monstrance,” says Burke, “is the foal of wits of ambition.”
The evil, such as it is, inheres in the nature of the thing, with its consequent “alarms of politicians.” It may be remedied
harmless, but while liberty exists, it can never be destroyed.
Like the name of Pallas on the shield of Minerva, envy cannot
environ; they are rather to be respected than to be corrected.
Thus the reviewer, turning from the work of verbal criticism,
undertakes to examine and controvert the deceptions taught in
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instructed, not only in moral and political philosophy, but in
I hear that they are all alumni of William and Mary, and almost all contemporaries; the rich fruit of one abundant harvest. While we think of these men, may we not be allowed to hope that this system of education which has given them to their country, may continue to furnish others, in whose presence the ignorant pre-
tended to be learned, and in whose company we looked back in such a result no one would rejoice more than ourselves—no, not even our friends the reviewer, and for its accomplishment, there is no means by which we look with more tenderness than President Dew. Praying God to inspire him in his labors, of him and his reviewer we take a courteous farewell. To the latter we feel ourselves obliged by his neat and elegant critique, and beg him, to believe, that our sense of his merit and his own, is not the least, because we have felt it our duty to screen another one. There is no man to whom we look with more reverence than our correspondent A. B. L. surprises us with the discovery that the song of Laflayre, which he evidently had before his eyes when he wrote, has the "woodbine" instead of the "ivy," and we feel at once that no one could formulate himself to be a tree, he might, very reasonably, choose to clothe it by that beautiful flower, rather than by any ivy in the world (unless, indeed, it were one of those sweet Ivies that happen to be growing and blooming to or near a certain borough that we know). But we keep our readers too long from the letters.

**Augusta, Georgia, 16th March, 1837.**

Sir,—From the last number of the Messenger, I learn that you have been rudely handled, by a writer in the Pittsburg Daily Times, for ascribing the ode "To My Wife," in the October number of your truly valuable periodical, to Lindley Murray. Surely, your mistake was quite too natural, to justify the sharp reproof of the writer in the Times. But what will he, and his indorser (the Editor of the Times) say, when they hear, that Mr. Hulsteford has no more claims to the authorship of that piece, than Lindley Murray! In point of fact, it was written by Scott, for the name of John L. L. S. a contributor and companion of Burns. It is to be found at page sixty-seven of the first volume of the Glasgow edition of the Encyclopaedia of Music; which was published nearly twenty years before the latest song is, in fact, sanctioned by the best classics, to prove it. In the midst of his tender song, which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. At least, their coming out in that work would appear according to the "Viccanic Chaplet," which he certainly edited. A. B. L.

TO MY WIFE.

When on thy bosom I recline, Eunup'tid still to call thee mine, To call thee mine for life; I glory in the sacred tie; Which modern wits and fools despise, Of Husband and of Wife.

One mutual flame inspires our bliss; The tender look, the melting kiss, Even years have not destroyed; Some sweet sensation ever new Springs up, and proves the utmost true, That Love can never be cloyed. Have I a wish?—'tis all for thee; Hast thou a wish?—'tis all for me. So oft our moments move, That angels look with ardent gaze, Well pleased to see our happy days, And bid us live—and love. If cares arise—and cares will come— Thy bosom is my softest bower; I'll tell me there to rest; And is there ought to disturb my fair? I'll bid her sigh out every care, And lose it in my breast. Have I a wish?—'tis all for her, All hers and mine are rolled in one— Our hearts are so entwined, That, like the ivy round the tree, Bound up in closest amity, 'Tis Death to be disjoined.