

THE

214

PRINCETON MAGAZINE.

EDITED BY

WILLIAM C. ALEXANDER.

VOL. I.

PRINTED BY JOHN T. ROBINSON.

1850.

THE
PRINCETON MAGAZINE.

PRINCETON IN 1801.

In the spring of 1801 I passed through Princeton, on my way to New England, where I spent the summer. One object of my visit was to become acquainted with the flourishing colleges of the northern and eastern States; as many of the commencements as possible were therefore embraced in the tour. The failure of a horse in some degree frustrated the plan.

At Harvard, I had the pleasure of being introduced to President Willard, Professors Tappan, Pearson, and others. I was also able to attend the commencement at Dartmouth College. In passing from Massachusetts over the mountains of New Hampshire, I lodged within a few rods of the house of a farmer, the father of the Honourable Daniel Webster. The old gentleman came over to the tavern in the morning, and chatted for half an hour. Among other things he said that he had a son at Dartmouth, who was about to take his bachelor's degree. The father was large in frame, high-breasted and broad-shouldered, and, like his son, had heavy eyebrows. He was an affable man, of sound sense and considerable information, and expressed a wish that I might be

apoplectic and miserable as you please. Our hope is that your children will read this homily, and do better.

A. B.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH.

However jealous we may be of this prerogative in politics and social life, there is one department in which we are far from enjoying its perfection. I refer to composition and the use of language for rhetorical or literary purposes. That so few of our educated young men become eminent as writers, may be owing to this very restriction. Knowing something by experience, as well as observation, of its sad effects, I may perhaps do some one a kind office by a simple statement of my case, leaving others to derive from it such precepts and examples as may seem to be afforded by the narrative.

I was taught when young that in order to write well I must be careful to use words in their established and familiar meanings, and that in order to do this, I must know precisely what I meant, as well as how to say it. Upon these fundamental rules I practised many years, and am purposely adhering to them in these prefatory observations, for the purpose of showing their necessary tendency to produce a dry and rigid style. Another rule of the same kind is the one requiring some coherence in the thoughts, if not a close logical connection. By adhering to this antiquated method for some years I was at last convinced, that I could never accomplish any thing by means of it, and under this conviction was about to abandon the whole effort in despair, when it was happily suggested to my mind, that these rules of composition were tyrannical restrictions imposed by arbitrary power on the human mind, and therefore gross violations of that precious and inalienable birth-right, Freedom of Speech.

This idea I soon carried out to its remotest consequences, and thus reached the conclusion, that the customary requisition of precision in the use of words, distinctness in the thoughts, and coherent unity in the discourse, is ruinous to all ease and fertility in writing, and that a general emancipation of men's minds from this degrading bondage would inevitably flood the world with an abundance and variety of writings, both in prose and verse, sufficient to supply the whole race with "light reading" to the end of time. Were this discovery introduced into our colleges and schools, and there allowed to supersede the old and worthless rules of rhetoric, who knows but that every man, nay every child, might soon become an author? That a consummation so devoutly to be wished is not by any means chimerical, I undertake to prove by my own experience. I have said already that I never could write any thing, at all satisfactory to myself or others, on the ancient method. But no sooner did I make this great discovery, than a multitude of rich veins were opened in my mind, and I was able, with a very slight expenditure of time and labour, to supply the columns of a dozen periodicals with essays, tales, and sonnets, not only pleasing to myself but perfectly congenial to the taste of the contemporary public, which has long since given me a place among its choicest favourites. Let me illustrate the foregoing statement by a few examples. Had I been required, under the old régime, to write a chapter of historical romance, full of local and personal allusions and well stuffed with dates and proper names, I might have spent whole years in searching libraries, without being able to assure myself that I was right on any one point of geography or history. But in writing on the new plan, I am freed from the necessity of pausing for a moment to consult authorities or even to recall my long-lost knowledge. I have only to give free loose to my thoughts, and write as fast as I can move the pen, in order to produce any given quantity of matter like the following, which I hereby certify to be the genuine product of my method, furnished instantane and for this occasion.

THE FANDANGO OF OSIRIS.

On the green bank of the Ipecacuanah, near the base of the majestic Pampas, lived in early times a saponaceous Barbican, descended from the royal Serf of ancient Opodeldoc. In his small but comfortable saraband, composed of green viaticum and aromatic certiorari, this neglected surrogate enjoyed a varicose retirement with his only child, the fair Sarsaparilla. Oft in the stilly night, the traveller, as he crossed the Gutta Percha, or gazed from the summit of Papyrus on the valleys of Neuralgia, has heard the voice of this insensate anodyne, as she swept the chords of her bandanna, and poured forth one of the sciatic capsules of her native Gypsum. Sometimes her plastic form was seen, hypothetically muffled in an olla podrida of dark senna, or more abstrusely veiled in a habeas corpus of thin centipede. One morning in the spring of the year 1539, soon after the defeat of the Pragmatic Sanction on the field of Bonafide by the gallant Discount, as the aged Barbican was sitting with his daughter at a table of highly polished emory, partaking of stewed parasangs and neuter verbs, the shrill sound of a chrysolite aroused them, and the form of a Fandango, clad in chloroform and armed with a calvinistic diaphragm, appeared before them. Sarsaparilla trembled as she gazed upon the obese stranger; then applying her lips to a catapult of silver, which she wore suspended by a bill of lading, she uttered a cameo so subdued and piercing, that the fierce Fandango grasped his tocsin and withdrew into the ottoman.

So much for romantic fiction; but this method is equally effective in declamatory eloquence. When a boy at school and college, I could never write a speech to save my life or credit. Why? Because I foolishly waited till I should know what I meant to say, and could find words exactly to express it. But now, you have only to suggest a theme, and

I am ready to declaim upon it ad infinitum. Let us take for example, as the subject of a Fourth of July speech,

THE FALL OF HUNGARY.

Amidst the wild swell of tumultuous misanthropy, careering on the asteroids of public grief, methinks I see an oleaginous paralogism slowly ascending from the miasmatic vestibules of hapless Hungary. From a thousand viaducts of blooming iodine, the poor mephitic paynims of Bulgaria and Tyrol mingle their beatific sighs with those of aboriginal siroccos. Oh what a diatribe of stalwart curses must distill upon the petrified antennæ of the tyrant, as he sits devout upon his callous throne, and wields his nascent and sporadic sceptre. From the unctuous pinions of the palsied eagle, as he flaps them over the inchoate altar, there exudes a palinode of arid tears, enough to cauterize the iris of a Goth or Vandal, while from every tear an apoplectic whisper fills the lurid ear of benedictine Europe with the galvanizing distich, *Vox populi, Kossuth go brag!*

With equal ease, I can apply my method to the most abstruse metaphysical inquiries, which of old only served to give me a headache or a fit of nausea. At that time, I would just as soon have undertaken to square the circle as to venture an opinion upon any question of philosophy; but now I am ready, at a moment's warning, to grapple with the hardest, for example with the

DIAGNOSIS OF THE I AND THE NOT-I.

Assuming, as we safely may, that all the reflex actings of the rational idea towards the pole of semi-entity are naturally complicated with a tissue of non-negative impressions, which can only be disintegrated by a process of spontaneous and intuitive abstraction, it inevitably follows, as a self-sustaining corollary, that the isolated and connatural conceptions, formed

in this ante-speculative stage of intellectual activity, must be reflected on the faculty itself, or, to speak with philosophical precision, on the I, when viewed concretely as the not-I; and in this reciprocal self-reproduction, carried on by the direct and transverse action of the Reason and the Understanding, modified of course by those extraneous and illusory perceptions, which can never be entirely excluded from the mutual relations of the pure intelligence on one hand and the mixed operations of the will and the imagination on the other, may be detected, even by an infant eye, the true solution of this great philosophical enigma, the one sole self-developing criterion of the elemental difference between the not-I and the I.

I might multiply these specimens forever, with the utmost ease and pleasure to myself; for it is really delightful to write on currente calamo without the trouble or anxiety of finding either thoughts or words; but my decreasing paper warns me to conclude, and I shall therefore only add one other sample, which indeed I could not possibly omit without doing gross injustice to myself and my discovery. However useful this might be in helping the whole population, old and young, male and female, to write prose with a fertility and ease almost appalling, it would not after all claim a standpoint in the first rank of world-historical discoveries, if it did not afford equal aid in the production of good poetry. I know that it is like showing the brick as a sample of the house to give a single specimen of my poetical manufacture; but as I cannot now do more, and certainly will not do less, I proceed at once to plan and execute a beautiful

IMPROMPTU TO THE SPIRIT OF DREAMS.

How evanescent and marine
 Are thy chaotic uplands seen,
 Oh ever sublapsarian moon!
 A thousand caravans of light
 Were not so spherically bright,
 Or ventilated half so soon.

II.

Methought I stood upon a cone
Of solid allopathic stone,
And gazed athwart the breezy skies ;
When lo, from yonder planisphere
A vapid atrabilious tear
Was shed by pantomimic eyes.

III.

Adieu, Miasma, cries a voice,
In which Aleppo might rejoice,
So perifocal were its tones ;
Adieu, Miasma, think of me
Beyond the antinomian sea,
Which covers my pellucid bones.

IV.

Again, again, my bark is tossed
Upon the raging holocaust
Of that acidulated sea,
And diapasons pouring down
With lunar caustic join to drown
My transcendental epopee.

With equal ease and equal elegance, I hereby pledge myself to write instanter any quantity of prose or verse, on any subject, known or unknown, at the lowest market prices. Should additional samples be required, I hold myself in readiness to furnish them in any measure, style, or quantity, at a moment's warning, with a view not only to my personal emolument, but also to the demonstration of my darling dogma, that the grand prerequisite to universal authorship is neither genius, sense, nor taste, but unrestricted and irrevocable

Freedom of Speech.

THE
PRINCETON MAGAZINE.

THE GOTHS AND THEIR SONS.*

When it is considered that, with some slender exceptions, all we have of the language spoken by the mighty Goths is contained in one translation of the New Testament, and that of this there is but one manuscript, it is remarkable that so many grammars and glossaries should have appeared. Two of the most important works have been published since the literature of the Gothic was posted up by Bosworth, in his learned but rambling preface of two hundred pages; we mean the "Glossarium der Gothischen Sprache, von H. C. v. d. Gabelenz und Dr. J. Loebe," (Leipz. 1843, 4to. pp. 294,) and the book named above this article. The grammar which accompanies the former of these is thorough and exhaustive; founded on the latest conclusions of Bopp, Pott, and Grimm, respecting the Indo-European languages, and offering aids for the study of all the Teutonic tongues, especially of the Anglo-Saxon. Here, as in the somewhat mortifying instance of Rask's Anglo-Saxon Grammar, English scholarship has lain still, and allowed the palm to be taken by continental research. Even now, the copies of Rask which have fallen under our eye, are printed at Copenhagen.

* *Gothisches Glossar*, von Ernst Schulze. Mit einer Vorrede von Jacob Grimm. Magdeburg. 4to. pp. xxii. 454.

Let not the day-bright hemisphere turn back,
Till I have for a little space emerged.
Stay thy vast shadowing wing, with kind eclipse,
Till my long-dazzled eye hath caught the forms
Which poise their hazy seeming in mid-heaven.
—But lo! 'tis coffee, sublunary urn
Once hight ambrosia, which Dan Homer stole
From Arab wanderings; 'tis our Hebe pours
The stream of opposites, the black, the white,
And crystals saccharine confirm the bans.
Probatum est: my hat and stick—Good-b'ye.

v.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH, No. II.

Besides the tyrannical restrictions usually imposed upon young writers, as to the use of words and phrases, there is another equally oppressive, as to the train of thought or succession of ideas. It is surely an intolerable check upon the active and excited mind, to require a close adherence to one subject, which moreover tends to weary and disgust the reader. Freedom of thought and speech in this respect, would render composition a source of pleasure to both parties. This improvement might indeed be pushed so far as to recognise variety of topics, not merely as allowable, but as a most desirable end, to be deliberately sought by the exercise of ingenuity and skill. For example, if instead of wearing one theme threadbare, in our books prepared for children, they were constructed on the plan of the kaleidoscope, with what delight would the youthful reader turn away from the monotony of Esop, Bunyan, or De Foe, to such a treat as the following

ZOOLOGICAL TALE.

As I was sealing up a letter of importance, and for that

purpose had a taper burning on my table, I was startled by a loud noise at my door, and running out beheld, to my astonishment, a man holding a reindeer by the horns. Before I could interrogate him, the rhinoceros suddenly sprang towards me, and before I could avoid it, threw me down, and whapped its trunk around me. Having heard of such a case before, I silently drew out my penknife, and plunged it into the throat of the serpent, which immediately relaxed its grasp. Perceiving that it was about to roar, and dreading the effect upon my nervous system, I seized the lion's mane and twisted it about my arm until its eyes began to start out of its head. I seemed now to have it in my power, but remembering that the ostrich, by the flapping of its wings, can break a man's arm, I contrived to mount upon the bird's back, and was carried by it into the great desert. After riding several hours, I began to feel exhausted, and by pressing on the camel's hump, induced it to kneel down. I then alighted and surveyed with admiration, the variegated stripes of my zebra, which was browsing in a lazy and indifferent manner; but a shrill cry from the desert made it lift up its head and stretch out its long neck in a manner peculiar to the young giraffe. Having suffered it to rest, I once more mounted on my antelope, which started like an arrow from the bow, but afterwards relaxed its efforts. This is not uncommon with the best Arabian horses, such as mine unquestionably was. At length it neighed and stood still, nor could any thing induce it to go on. I threw myself upon the ground and slept. On waking I discovered that my hippopotamus was in the water, but it soon came out and quietly received its burden. As I knew the habits of the animal, I was afraid that other crocodiles might see mine and attack it, and I therefore kept as far as possible from the river's side; but to my extreme mortification, I had not gone more than half a mile before I saw a herd of buffaloes approaching, exactly like the one on which I rode. I therefore urged mine in an opposite direction, till we reached a precipice of rugged rocks.

Forgetting the peculiar habits of the creature, I used no precaution to prevent its leaping from rock to rock, in a way which nothing but a wild goat could have practised. I was every moment in the most appalling danger, but at length arrived safely at the bottom of the precipice, where my faithful beast regaled my ears with one of those sonorous brays peculiar to the wild ass of the desert. This brought immediately around me a large flock of sheep from all the neighbouring pastures. An ungovernable instinct led my wolf, and me upon his back, at once into the midst of the poor animals. As soon as he had slaked his thirst of blood, he set off in the same direction as before, but we had not gone far when the cry of hounds apprized us that a fox-chase was in progress, and my sly fox stole away into the mountains. Here the cold would have been insufferable, but for the warm shaggy coat of the bear on which I sat. As we approached the inhabited part of the country, he began to run, and did not stop till with a loud bark he set me down at my own door. Patting my faithful dog upon the head as a reward of his exertions, I took him up and carried him into my chamber, where I laid him on the table. Having trimmed my lamp and mended my fire, I took up the sealingwax again and sealed my letter.

With suitable questions at the bottom of the page, such as "Zebra, how coloured?" "Giraffe, what kind of neck?" this story would no doubt be well received by that class of teachers who are chiefly afraid of tiring their pupils or allowing them to see with their own eyes.

But it is not merely to the very young that this improvement is adapted to be useful. It may serve an equally important purpose for those children of a larger growth who love variety of incident, and care not how fictitious or improbable it may be, if only free from uniformity and sameness. For such, provision may be made, not only in the form exemplified above, but with a slight modification, which instead of introducing new themes in perpetual succession, blends

two or more of them together through the whole course of a narrative, as in the following

ORIENTAL TALE.

As Reis Ibrahim was one day walking in the great square of Zakakah, his mule stumbled, and threw him on his head, which destroyed the equilibrium of the boat, and it began to fill with water. At this critical moment, an adventurous stranger made a sudden jump at the horses' heads, and brought them to a stand-still, whereupon Reis Ibrahim threw open the window and implored the people to save him from the devouring element. As several engines were now playing on the flames, it was supposed that they would quickly be subdued; but at a sudden turn in the road, they again took fright, and by a violent motion, brought the gunwale under water. The passengers, perceiving the imminent danger, alighted on the very edge, and looking down the precipice, beheld Reis Ibrahim lying senseless in the street, and his mule standing by him. The smoke was so thick and the flames so hot, that they could not reach him, as he stood at the window, making gestures of entreaty and despair. At length, one of the firemen belonging to the Hook and Ladder Company, threw off his coat, and jumping overboard, swam round the vessel, and by means of notches which he cut with a hatchet in the surface of the rock, reached a projecting ledge about half way down the precipice, and raising Ibrahim upon his feet, assisted him in walking to a neighbouring shop, where he was laid upon the floor, and all the methods used for his resuscitation, which are commonly resorted to in cases of drowning. While they were thus employed, old Abdallah came upon them unarmed, and seeing his son in that condition, drew his sword, and rushing on the advanced guard of the enemy, was taken prisoner. A loud shout from the Hook and Ladder Company followed this exploit. Excited by the example of their comrade, they

descended one by one into the water, till they reached the ledge, and thence by means of ladders got upon the roof, which was now fast disappearing as the waves washed over it. The crackling of the timbers aroused Reis Ibrahim, who no sooner saw his aged father chained and guarded by the enemy, than he rushed into the thickest of the battle, and had just succeeded in disentangling the frantic animal by cutting the harness, when the roof fell in, and at the same moment, the mainmast went by the board, crushing the carriage and severely injuring the driver. Old Abdallah was now hanging by a twig over the precipice. Another wave would either cause the wreck to disappear, or break his hold upon the vessel. At this awful crisis, while the smoke and flame prevented any one from entering, and all were waiting in breathless terror for the next wave to wash over them, the twig broke, and the enemy advancing rapidly, without a shot or shout, surrounded them and called upon them to lay down their arms. At this insulting summons, Abdallah took his stand upon the burning rafters, and Reis Ibrahim upon the bowsprit which was still above the water, while the terrified postilion still retained his seat upon the remaining horse, and the lady remained inside of the carriage. In this posture, while the drums and trumpets mingled with the roar of the artillery, they all leaped headlong from the verge of the precipice into the flames, and were buried together in a watery grave.

THE PROSPECTS OF THE MECHANIC.

American working-men are said to hold their heads a little high; and they have a good right. A man that by fair healthy business, just about enough to keep his muscles in play can have his snug house, all painted, papered and