

"All the world's a stage.

And all the men and women merely players?"

Either might answer the purpose, were it not that the word "history" immediately preceding would seem to limit us to the celebrated metaphor of Shakspeare. Then, as to the "roots," which is the proprietor, the "stage" or the "history?" Can a stage be properly said to have roots, or a history either? The truth is, this sentence—and it is not, we are sorry to observe, the only one of the kind—is as nearly as possible allied to absolute nonsense. Mr. Patterson, in attempting to be philosophical, has got into deep waters, and flounders pitifully. Generally speaking, and *ceteris paribus*, a man who has got a firm hold of an idea or conception will express it in clear and forcible language. A vigorous thought will always have a ready command of vigorous and expressive words. Our author, when he attempts the philosophical, sees dimly and as through a glass, and by consequence to the natural fascination of his style there is then superadded the charm of mystery. It is the boast of diplomatic people and despotic monarchs, that, in their business intercourse with each other, they can write whole pages which will seem to affect the subject-matter, but will not; which may mean anything, or everything, or nothing, just as the writer pleases. Our reverend friend will doubtless plead innocent to a charge like this. He labors hard, and with the sweat of his brow, to appear clear and clever, but we would defy the Autocrat of France himself to be more inscrutable than he is at times.

A few more quotations will suffice for our purpose. In the second page, near the bottom, we read as follows:—

"Even local tradition preserves any information concerning them only for a brief period. In a few generations their very names will be forgotten on earth,—their monuments will crumble to dust, and nothing mark the spot where their ashes repose, so that all efforts to preserve the recollection of them seems like a vain struggle with the decree of the Almighty."

The first sentence, though short, is too long and too wordy for the sense it conveys. The second sentence is not only devoid of anything like conciseness, but also contains a gross grammatical blunder. We pass on to the next page:—

"Justice to their memory, as well as the profit of those who succeed, *requires* that their deeds should be recorded, their virtues honored, and their names embalmed, in the grateful recollections of posterity."

Here we have some approach to conciseness, we regard to euphony, but another grammatical mistake. In the first sentence of the next paragraph the word "antecedents" is misapplied. An antecedent is a *thing* going before, while he evidently means a *person* going before. "Antecedent" is here employed to signify "progenitor," which is

not its legitimate meaning. The last sentence of the same paragraph affords an excellent example of our author's style, or rather, want of style, and treats us to a third breach of the rules of Lindley Murray:—

"Nor can he be connected historically with any of those great events which in the past have decided the destinies of nations; but we can record incidents, which to him who will 'observe the work of the Lord and consider the operations of his hand,' mark the wonder-working hand of Divine Providence, which connects all events past, present, and future, the smallest as well as the greatest in one scheme; and by the manner in which they combine to work out his purposes *manifests* his glory, so as to attract to himself the admiration, the esteem, the reverence, and the love of intelligent beings."

We have here the characteristic helter-skelter arrangement of clauses, the characteristic disregard of sound, and the equally characteristic vagueness of sense. Merely remarking that in the first four pages of this work we have detected no less than *three* fundamental errors in grammar, and that, in the remainder of the chapter, where he sketches the events which gave rise to the Secession, the author appears to have partially caught up the rapid narrative style of the books he had been reading on the subject, we alight upon page 36, and quote as follows:—

"Those who knew him in his later days—who recollect the deep seriousness that pervaded his whole conversation—his objection to sinful levity or even excessive mirth, will scarcely credit this; but the evidence upon which we make the statement is undoubted; and those who peruse his writings, will sometimes detect in them an under current of mirth, which though repressed by the weight of what he felt resting upon him as a minister of Christ, occasionally came to the surface, and in the company of his familiar friends, particularly his brethren in the ministry, burst forth in a rich fountain of harmless merriment, and which gave in after life to a piety of the deepest and most earnest nature, an air of cheerfulness, which preserved it from any appearance of moroseness or gloom."

We quarrel with our friend's grammar again in page 37:—

"The immediate vicinity of his birth-place, was the scene of many sanguinary conflicts between the Campbells and MacGregors; whilst eastward of Comrie, *is* the village *Fiantlach* or Fingal's house, and Cairn Comhol, in memory of Fingal's father, and also the supposed tomb of Ossian."

We quote from page 49:—

"If such was the impression which his departure produced upon the mind of his acquaintance, our readers may imagine what must have been the feelings, on the occasion, of his father's family, each member of which was distinguished naturally by great tenderness of heart, and whose natural feelings