The Art of EXTEMPORE SPEAKING

HAROLD FORD, M.A., LL.B.

The Art of
EXTEMPORE
SPEAKING

WITHOUT MS. OR NOTES;

OR,

HOW TO ATTAIN FLUENCY OF SPEECH.

BY

HAROLD FORD, M.A., LL.B., B.C.L.,

Rector of Taddington,

AUTHOR OF 'THE PRINCIPIA OF VOCAL DELIVERY,' 'THE ART OF SPEAKING AND READING,' 'EVANGELIUM IN EVANGELIO,' ETC.

'Maximus vero studiorum fructus est, et velut præmium quoddam amplissimum longi laboris, *ex tempore dicendi facultas.*'

QUINT.

Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged.

LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1898.

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FROM THE LATE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE:

'I congratulate you on the high testimonials your work has received.'

To

HIS GRACE THE

DUKE OF RUTLAND, K.G.,

THIS LITTLE WORK

IS,

WITH KIND PERMISSION,

MOST GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE aim of the author in this treatise is to set forth the first principles of the art of extempore speaking; to show that the faculty of expression should be cultivated side by side with the faculty of thought; that the verbal representation of thought should be coeval with thought.

As such, it deals more with language than with matter; with the expression of thought than with thought itself.

To enlarge one's vocabulary and make the tongue more pliant in speech, should

be the ambition of everyone who would rise to the level of an efficient extempore speaker.

Yet how obviously disregarded is the art of extempore speaking by the most modest aspirant whether to the pulpit, bar, or platform.

To such the author offers this small volume, with the earnest hope that the result of his labours may at least give an impetus to the study of a well-nigh obsolete art.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

THE undoubted success achieved by the first edition of this work, and the flattering reception accorded it at the hands of the press, are my apology, if such be wanting, for venturing upon the issue of a second edition.

I have taken the opportunity or expanding the work by the addition of two chapters on what I conceive to be of paramount importance to an extempore speaker—viz., mental vision and memory.

In this enlarged form I send it forth,

with the hope that it may prove to be of real and permanent value to those for whom it is specially designed, whether in training for the pulpit, bar, or platform.

TADDINGTON RECTORY,
BUXTON,
May, 1898.

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

WHY is it that the pulpit and the platform alike witness to the paucity of efficient speakers and to repeated failures in the art of public speaking?

Because it is falsely and tacitly assumed that the faculty of speech—the exponent of an intellectual soul—is, as it were, a sort of instrument, which, by some intuitive power, may be played upon with varying degrees of skill, by the most uninstructed tyro, and whose stops and entire compass may therefore be controlled to 'discourse most excellent music' without any special instruction or training.

In any other art no one, without the boldest effrontery, would dare obtrude himself upon an audience until he had undergone some course of preparatory training; nor in any other art would anyone be suffered to make in public raw and crude attempts to do effectively what he has never been trained to do at all. But in the art of public speaking the almost universal opinion is, by implication, that the extemporaneous speaker is the product of some accidental growth, or the result of some equally inexplicable and fortuitous means.

Such a notion is contrary to the opinions and practice of both ancient and modern orators.

In the ancient republics of Greece and Rome men were orators, not by nature or accident, but became such by education and training. Theirs was not a spontaneous and accidental growth into unrivalled

oratorical eminence; that eminence was reached by the tedious pathway of patient, persistent practice and infinite labour. They had their Schools of Rhetoric in which they submitted to a rigid and systematic training —*infinitus labor et quotidiana meditatio.**

'They exercised themselves,' writes Dr. Ware, 'frequently both before equals, and in the presence of teachers, who criticised, reproved, rebuked, excited emulation, and left nothing undone which art and perseverance could accomplish. The greatest orators of antiquity, so far from being favoured by natural tendencies, except indeed in their high intellectual endowments, had to struggle against natural obstacles, and instead of growing up spontaneously to their unrivalled eminence, they forced themselves forward by the most discouraging artificial process.

* Tac. de Or. Dial.

'Cicero failed at first through weakness of lungs and an excessive vehemence of manner, which wearied his hearers and defeated his own purpose. These defects were conquered by study and discipline. Cicero exiled himself from home, and during his absence in many lands passed not a day without a rhetorical exercise; seeking the masters who were most stern in criticism as the surest means of leading him to the perfection at which he aimed.'

Take, too, the example of Demosthenes. Was that power with which was convulsed the very throne of Macedon the spontaneous effort of one untrained in the art of oratory? What more fatal obstacle were it possible for an aspirant to oratory to encounter than an impediment of speech? Yet this, by unwearied application, Demosthenes combated and overcame; and now before the whole world he stands prominent

and imperishable within the Temple of Fame as 'a man who proved himself to be a miracle of genius, because he had been a miracle of labour.'

Instances, too, might be multiplied of modern orators who, so far from despising the methods of the ancients, have similarly resorted to such modes of training as have commended themselves to them. Suffice it to give a few instances.

'For months together,' writes the biographer of Bishop Wilberforce, 'the course of preparation of each sermon is specified, together with memoranda as to its efficacy when delivered.' It is said of the late John Bright that during the Parliamentary session it was his wont regularly to read aloud from one of the poets the last thing at night. He himself admits that much study was given to the preparation of his speeches. 'There are,' he used to say, 'passages which

for accuracy I write down, as almost invariably the concluding words and sentences.'

We know that Sheridan, Disraeli, the late Lord Derby and Brougham all prepared their speeches *ad unguem.*

The necessary inference therefore is, that if such men of acknowledged oratorical gifts deemed it not unnecessary to undergo some preparation, how infinitely more indispensable is it for those of inferior powers and attainments.

'*Orator fit, non nascitur*,' wrote Cicero. True it is that a man must be born with certain qualities without which true oratory is rendered an impossibility. These, however, in varying degrees most men possess. Yet not even the possession of these innate qualities can supersede the necessity of judicious and well-directed training. 'No man,' writes the Bishop of Ripon, 'will

become a great or effective speaker without training.'

All our powers, whether of mind or body, are given us in a state of imperfection. It is only in action that they have the power to grow. The purpose therefore of all training—mental, physical, or otherwise—is that of growth or development—of expansion towards ultimate perfection.

Even so is it with the power of speech. The 'orator is made' through the most natural process of a training specially directed to that end, that is, through the application of certain prescribed principles for developing the gifts he has, and bestowing upon him the skill to use them. 'Maximus vero studiorum fructus est, et velut præmium quoddam amplissimum longi laboris, *ex tempore dicendi facultas*.'*

There are undoubtedly those who would

* Quint.

never rise to the level of efficient extempore speakers by the application of any principles in the world, because they are deficient in the necessary mental or other qualifications. But these are few compared with those within whose power it is to acquire the art of extempore speaking. 'That a man must be born with some special gift,' wrote the late Archbishop Magee, 'in order to obtain it is an entire mistake. Depend upon it, the power is within reach of nine out of ten of the clergy. This is obvious, because the ministers of all other churches do possess it. So also do most members of Parliament, after a fashion.'

Extempore speaking, then, is an art to be acquired, ignore it how we may. And it is mainly due to the non-recognition of this fact that such raw and crude attempts are made at times in the pulpit and on the

platform to do effectively what men have never been instructed to do at all. It has been said that men begin at the wrong end, attempting to speak before studying the art of oratory, or even storing the mind with treasures of thought and language.

I have briefly alluded to those who have become either proficient or pre-eminent in the art, and we find — as we always shall find—that they are precisely those who, having recognised it as an art, have taken the utmost pains in the application of its principles.

CHAPTER II.

EXTEMPORE SPEAKING DEFINED.

THAT we may the better understand what are the fundamental principles of extempore speaking it were well first to define what extempore speaking really is.

It postulates the absence of book or manuscript. It is, however, an ambiguous term. It means either speaking on the 'spur of the moment,' that is, without any preparation whatever anterior to the moment, or speaking with no other preparation than that of the subject-matter, leaving the language to the inspiration of the moment. The former is without doubt the strict

literal meaning of the term. The cases are, however, extremely rare in which men are so gifted by nature as to be able to speak purely extempore without any previous preparation whatever. The latter of the above two propositions represents the popular acceptation of the term, viz., that of speaking with no preparation other than that of the subject-matter or our discourse, trusting to the inspiration of the moment for the language in which it is to be embodied.

By the term extempore speaking, then, is understood the act of speaking on the 'spur of the moment,' that is, without any preparation of the words and phrases anterior to the moment. It regards the *mode*, not the matter, of the discourse.

This, of course, presupposes the absolute mastery beforehand of the subject-matter,

and that it has assumed a clearly defined and orderly shape in the mind.

We start with this primary assumption that none can justifiably claim the right to address others but he who has something to say; that he who obtrudes himself upon the attention of his fellow-men with a view to appealing to their intellect or feelings, must first have something existing in his own mind and heart to which he wishes to give expression, and that that something must have been clearly conceived and shaped in his mind as a harmonious and consistent whole.

This idea of extemporization is identical with that of Fénelon, who thus describes an extempore preacher:

'A man who is well instructed and who has a great facility of expressing himself; a man who has meditated deeply in all their bearings the principles of the subject

which he is to treat; who *has conceived that subject in his intellect, and arranged his arguments in the clearest manner;* who has prepared a certain number of striking figures and of touching sentiments which may render it sensible and bring it home to his hearers; who knows perfectly all that he ought to say, and the precise place in which to say it, so that *nothing remains at the moment of delivery but to find words* in which to express himself.'*

The art, therefore, of extempore speaking has reference more to the form of words which the speaker will employ than to the requisite mental preparation beforehand. It has more to do with *language* than with matter, with *form* than thought. If, then, the art of extemporization has to do more with language in which thought is to be

* The italics are mine.

clothed than with thought itself, the inference is, that to possess fluency of language lies at the very threshold of all extempore speaking, and that it constitutes the very foundation of all true oratory.

Lord Brougham, in writing to the father of Macaulay, lays down the following specific directions for the cultivation of oratory:

'The first point is this: The beginning of the art is to acquire a habit of *easy speaking*, and in whatever way this can be had, it must be had. . . . I say, let him, first of all, learn to speak easily and fluently, as well and as sensibly as he can, no doubt, but at any rate let him learn to speak. It is the requisite *foundation*, and on *it you must build* . . . to acquire which everything else must, for the present, be sacrificed.'

Having conceded thus much, we will

now proceed to consider how to become more or less efficient in the expression of our thoughts by acquiring a greater fluency of language.

CHAPTER III.

FLUENCY INDISPENSABLE.

TO speak with fluency and ease is one of the constituent elements of extempore speaking. There may be a keen and ready wit, great lucidity of thought and cogency of reasoning, united to a mind of almost infinite resource ; but all these will avail little or nothing if, in the expression of them, we are fettered by a slowness of utterance, or maimed by a halting mode of delivery. When there is an obviously laboured effort to clothe our thoughts with words which do not swiftly and spontaneously offer themselves, then speech is bereft of its power, and the flow of passionate,

fervid eloquence is frozen at its fountain-head.

It is often argued that if a man have something to say, it will find expression ; that, if the mind be thoroughly conversant with its subject, its orderly arrangement and lucid expression will naturally follow. Experience does not justify such a statement. If this were true, how comes it that men of capacious intellect and extensive knowledge are not infrequently found wanting in the power of readily communicating the knowledge they have? No ; the faculty of expression must be cultivated side by side with the faculty of thought. There is needed then a facile and fluent expression —a ready and swift response of the tongue to every thought and emotion of the mind. The thought must be no sooner conceived, or the emotion felt, than its precise verbal equivalent must be instantly on the tongue

ready for utterance. The verbal representation of thought must be coeval, or simultaneous, with the thought itself.

Fluency of language is the *sine quâ non* of all true oratory. Take from it this qualification, and it instantly ceases to be oratory.

There are, of course, other qualifications which concur to make the orator. A mere copious flow of words would no more constitute an orator than would a speaking automaton. Fluency alone would produce not an orator, but an abortion. Indeed, to possess it, and it alone, is a misfortune rather than a desirable acquisition. To fluency of language must be united affluence of thought. Behind the words must stand the man, whose words are the reflex of his own mind and heart—words pregnant with intellectual energy, and instinct with feeling. 'Let your thoughts,' writes the

Bishop of Ripon, 'govern your language, and not your language govern your thought.' Fluency is, however, an essential adjunct, without which extemporaneous speech were an impossibility. How, therefore, to acquire this fluency must be a matter of primary importance to everyone who would rise to the level of an efficient extempore speaker.

CHAPTER IV.

FLUENCY ATTAINABLE.

TO attain this fluency is both to extend our vocabulary of words, and to have them at our ready command. By a ready command is meant, that they shall recur unhesitatingly to the mind in swift obedience to every impulse of thought and feeling, and obtrude themselves, as it were, upon our tongue for utterance whenever thought and feeling demand expression.

It is not enough to possess only a vocabulary of words, though this were indispensable. We need besides a vocabulary (and here, I think, is the point too often

lost sight of) fluency in the use of those words in which our vocabulary consists. To have in the mind, or be in intelligent possession of, a copious vocabulary is one thing ; to be able with facility to use that vocabulary is quite another. This implies both the storing of ideas in the mind, by which the vocabulary is formed and enlarged, and the constant passage of words over the lips, by which fluency is acquired. The question then occurs to the mind, How shall we both extend our vocabulary, and provide ourselves with a *copia verborum* which shall instantly serve us whenever thought demands expression ?

This is best answered by first inquiring what are the means whereby we acquire the power of using words at all. Is it not by the process of constant imitation and repetition of words ?

At our birth we are mute, that is, as

regards the articulate use of words. We have no vocabulary. The strings of our tongue are only gradually unloosened as we gain the power of imitating articulate sounds. And with the growth of this power comes the formation of our first vocabulary. By the same process, then, by which this limited vocabulary is first formed shall we extend or enlarge it, *i.e.*, by the constant use of words, until their use shall have become a habit. Ease and facility in the use of words is the immediate and necessary result of their constant usage, and will be in direct proportion to our acquaintance with them. Now the very notion of acquaintance implies the notion of frequent use or habit.

A writer says, in speaking of the style of the younger Pitt, 'This profuse and interminable flow of words is not in itself either a rare or remarkable endowment. It is

wholly a thing of *habit*, and is exercised by every village lawyer with various degrees of power and grace.' Now, what is a habit other than an aptitude for the performance of certain actions acquired by frequently doing the same thing?

In like manner, fluency of speech is an aptitude for the use of words, acquired by their frequent usage till it has matured into a habit. To form the habit, then, implies persistent and laborious training in the use of words, and not of words alone, but also of ideas.

Fluency can only be acquired by the constant recurrence of ideas to the mind and words to the lips.

Now it is the very essence of all public speaking that we learn to distinguish between words and ideas. Words are not ideas. They are the embodiment or verbal signs of ideas—the medium through which

ideas are transmitted from mind to mind. It is not for me within the limits of this work to discuss more than briefly (which I have done in a subsequent chapter) the question whether language is identical with thought, *i.e.*, whether we can think without words.* But what I do say is this, that words and ideas should be indissolubly connected in the mind of a speaker.

As soon, therefore, as we become conscious of the presence of any thought or idea in the mind, side by side with it there should instantly spring up its corresponding or representative word. And *vice versâ*, every word that flows from our tongue or pen should give instant birth to its corresponding idea.

The great secret which underlies the

* For an able discussion on the subject *vide* article by Max Müller in the *Nineteenth Century* of March, 1889.

art of extemporaneous speech is that of seeing ideas with the mind. It is a mental vision. Ideas are suggested to the mind by sensation or reflection.* That is, they reach the mind through the avenues of sense, or by the process of reflection, by which ideas are said to be perceived by the mind. Now as to perception of ideas by the mind, words may be read purely mechanically, wholly dissociated from ideas, without conveying to the mind any idea at all; or words may be read in such a manner as to convey inadequately or vaguely to the mind their precise meaning. In the first of these two cases no ideas reach the mind through the words, because the process of reflection and consequent perception is wanting. And 'ideas,' says Locke, 'are nothing but actual perceptions in the mind.' There being no ideas

* Locke 'On the Human Understanding.'

none can be reproduced. You cannot produce anything from what is non-existent. *Ex nihilo nihil fit.* Nothing begets nothing. This want of reflection is absolutely fatal to a speaker. No less so is that lax and slovenly use of words which begets an inaccuracy of thought. For if our own thoughts be confused and obscure they cannot reach the mind of our hearers in any intelligible form.

To acquire a copious and ready supply of words demands, then, the clear mental perception of ideas by which they reach, and are impressed upon, the mind. And the oftener the mind receives the impress of ideas, and the tongue that of words, proportionately will the mind and tongue gain in power of reproducing them. Words and ideas are the materials, so to speak, with which we have to work. They are, in fact, the only materials. We

must have them under complete control, so that they shall come at our instant bidding. To obtain this mastery over the mind and tongue involves persevering application and systematic training. It can only be achieved by the ordinary routine of habitual practice, and by no 'royal road' which would dispense with it.

Words must be constantly passing over the lips and the corresponding ideas through the mind, leaving behind an impress which becomes more and more ineffaceable with each succeeding passage. The constant recurrence of ideas to the mind will imprint them upon the memory, and the oftener the recurrence the more ineffaceable will be their impression there.

Thus, by storing the memory with ideas will our vocabulary be formed and enlarged.

The same rule applies to the usage of words. Those words which are oftenest

upon the lips and tongue, not of course dissociated from the ideas they represent, are precisely those which will be found to spontaneously offer themselves when our thoughts demand expression. And the oftener the words pass over the lips and tongue, the greater the ease which these members have of reproducing them.

In this manner, by the twofold process of imprinting ideas upon the mind, and impressing words upon the tongue and lips, is our vocabulary extended and fluency of speech acquired.

The process, therefore, is partly mechanical and partly mental. But by no other process than that of the repetition of words can the tongue be unloosened, so as to respond to the swift obedience of thought. As the strings of the infant's tongue are gradually loosened to frame articulate sounds by the process of verbal

repetition, so by the same gradual process are our powers of speech attained in their varying degrees of perfection, so as ultimately to reach the height of long-sustained oratorical efforts. How, then, to direct our training with a view to the formation of this habit and ultimate proficiency in the use of words will form the subject of the following chapters.

CHAPTER V.

HOW TO ATTAIN FLUENCY.

Method I.—Translation.

I HAVE already stated that it is essential to a speaker that he possess both a vocabulary, and fluency in the use of those words in which his vocabulary consists.

The three methods of training here submitted are therefore both for the extension of our vocabulary and a more facile and fluent expression of thought. The three methods are those of Translation, Reading aloud, and Substitution. These form a series of mental and verbal gymnastics.

The authorities quoted in support of the first and second methods, as a means of rendering the tongue more pliant in speech, amply justify their adoption by any aspirant to the pulpit or platform quite irrespective of any commendation of mine.

The third method has no other authority than what my own commendation can impress upon it, so that my readers must themselves judge of its merits or demerits.

For the acquisition of what Cicero calls a *flumen verborum*, the free translation from a foreign language to our own native tongue is invaluable. It has been, indisputably, an invariable practice with eminent orators, both ancient and modern, some of whom have attributed to the process much of the success they have achieved.

Its chief value lies in this, that in giving

expression to thought clothed in another language, it trains the mind in the perception of ideas, and the tongue in the accurate expression of those ideas in words.

In translating from another language to our own, the mind's work is to perceive the ideas through the medium of that other language, and to reproduce them in our own tongue. We have not to create the ideas ; they are already created. We have only to perceive and interpret them. To perceive is the work of the mind ; to mould into language is that of the tongue.

As soon, therefore, as we apprehend the ideas through the medium of the language, we are forced into the expression of them in such words as our mind suggests—the words that are oftenest upon our tongue and those we most commonly attach to those ideas.

During the process of translation we find that the ideas of the author are generally susceptible of being variously expressed. And so approximate synonyms will suggest themselves to the mind with an alacrity and appositeness proportioned to our vividness of mental perception and powers of accurate translation.

Here, then, lies the great value of translation. By it our vocabulary is enriched with the choice treasures of thought, the mind gains in the power of choosing the appropriate words, and the tongue in pliancy of utterance.

Of languages those of Greece and Rome transcend all modern ones as a discipline for the intellect, by reason of their regular structure and elasticity of expression. The delicate shades of expression of which these languages are susceptible being ‘ distinctions

in thought, not merely in words,' habituate the mind to accuracy of thought and perspicuity of expression, which form two of the most powerful charms of eloquence.

Of the value of translation, and especially of the classics, it will suffice to adduce only a few instances :

'Of that habit of felicitous diction which enables a man as it were by an instinct to put the right word in the right place . . . in regard to so much of skill in it as comes of having at hand, always, a rich thesaurus of approximate synonyms, there is one coincidence of practice between ancient and modern masters which may not be deemed unworthy of notice. We allude to an acquired habit of ready and even offhand translation of fine passages out of one language into another.

'Cicero, Quintilian, and the Younger Pliny enjoin this practice as indispensable

to any proficiency in eloquence, whilst of Cicero it is related, in connection with those exercitations for declaiming practice, alluded to in a former chapter, that he more frequently declaimed in Greek than in his native tongue.'*

Now, Pitt himself attributed to the practice of translation that remarkably copious flow of language which he undoubtedly possessed. 'I have always thought,' he said, 'that what little command of language I have came from a practice I had of reading off in the family, after tea, some passage of Livy or Cicero.' 'He was constantly in the habit of translating offhand any passage from the classics.'†

Again Lord Stanhope, in his installation address at Aberdeen, says, in reference

* D. Moore, 'Thoughts on Preaching.'

† 'Recollections,' by Samuel Rogers.

to Pitt's method of acquiring a *copia verborum*: 'No man had that gift of using in public speaking the right word in the right place; no man carried that gift to a higher degree of perfection, as all parties have owned, than Mr. Pitt. Now my father . . . ventured on one occasion to ask Mr. Pitt by what means —by what course of study—he had acquired that readiness of speech, that admirable readiness of speech—that aptness of finding the right word. Mr. Pitt replied that whatever readiness he might be thought to possess in that respect he believed he derived very much from a practice his father, the great Lord Chatham, had enjoined on him. Lord Chatham had bid him take up any book in some foreign language with which he was well acquainted —in Latin, Greek, or French for example. He then enjoined him to read out of this

work a passage in English, stopping where he was not sure of the word, until the right one came, and then proceed. Mr. Pitt states that he had assiduously followed this practice. At first he had often to stop for awhile before he could find the proper word ; but he found the difficulties gradually disappear, until what was a toil to him at first became at last an easy and familiar task.'*

The late Archbishop Magee, who enjoyed the distinction of being one of the greatest orators in the Anglican Church, writes to the same effect : 'Take a passage from some well-known classic author and render the passage into equivalent *words*, so as to express the same *idea*. Thus you will acquire the power of choosing, of substituting one word for another.' 'John Bright,' wrote the late Lord Coleridge,

* D. Moore, 'Thoughts on Preaching.'

'once told me that he knew very well what he had lost by not being acquainted with the classics, a fact which he constantly and frequently regretted, and tried to make up for by a careful study of the greatest English writers.'

We are not all favoured with a knowledge of the classics. In that case a translation from any language into our own tongue will serve our purpose. This practice, enjoined as it is by the masters of ancient and modern oratory, places beyond all manner of doubt its great efficacy in rendering the tongue more pliant in speech.

CHAPTER VI.

HOW TO ATTAIN FLUENCY—*continued.*

Method II.—Reading Aloud.

TO loosen the tongue, and render it more obedient to the impulse of thought and feeling, the practice of repeating from memory, or reading aloud, selections from authors of undoubted literary merit has been very frequently resorted to by great speakers. If habitually practised the style, too, of these authors becomes the mould in which our own is cast. Our diction receives its impress from those modes of expression with which the mind and tongue are most familiar.

Thus, by the practice of reading or reciting aloud, the language of these authors becomes incorporated into our own. Not only their ideas become our own possession, but their words, too, become our own personal property, so that in the expression of our thoughts they will flow from our lips as if they were the creation of our own brain. Dr. Stalker, in 'The Preacher and his Models,' writes: 'To obtain command of language it is good to hear the best speakers, and to read the best books. It has been my fortune to be acquainted with a good many celebrated preachers; and I have observed that, almost without exception, they have had a thorough acquaintance with the whole range of the higher English literature. To have the music of Shakespeare or Milton echoing in your memory, or to have lingering in your ear the cadence and sweep of Thackeray

and De Quincey, will almost unawares give you a good style. In reading over an old sermon of my own, I can almost tell whether or not, in the week of its composition, I was reading good literature. In the former case the language is apt to be full and harmonious, and sprinkled over with gay flowers of maxim and illustration, whereas in the latter the style of the performance is apt to be bald and jerky.'

No writer, I suppose, in this or any other age has wielded our language with greater pliancy and power than our national poet Shakespeare.

That subtle gift which he possessed in a pre-eminent degree of reading and portraying human nature in its infinite variety of phases is equalled only by his matchless power of verbal expression.

His is the perfect expression of sense. No man more than he has had that rare

gift of saying what he has had to say with an intenser accuracy of expression. So clear, too, and vivid is his every thought to the mind, and so remarkable his felicity of diction.

No author can therefore better subserve the purpose of acquiring a greater and more comprehensive power over language than Shakespeare.

'I know no help so great,' writes Bishop Gott, 'to loosen the tongue and to make it pliable to one's mind as Shakespeare Readings and a Debating Society. Like all who have tried them, I bear my hearty witness to their value.'

'I can often pray,' writes Dr. Parker, 'with greater liberty, with truer definiteness of expression, after a page of Carlyle than after many pages of almost any other man's writing.'

John Bright used regularly, during the

Session of Parliament, to read aloud the last thing at night from one of the standard poets, chiefly, I believe, from Milton, whose majestic lines he was often wont to quote.

Reading aloud the works of good authors, apart from its recognised value of loosening the tongue, has a decided advantage over reading silently, *i.e.*, without articulated utterance. In the latter, the mind is intent upon the ideas to the exclusion more or less of the mode of expression. In the former, apart from the ideas, the words and modes of expression obtrude themselves upon the attention, and the ear is trained to the rhythm of style and harmony of speech.

Thus, by reading aloud, we gain fluency on the one side, and the qualities of style on the other.

Of course, every man has his own style,

as every man, it has been wittily observed, has his own nose.

'*Le style c'est l'homme.*' What Buffon meant, I assume, is this: that the mind and temperament of a man, those things which make up his personality, these are the characteristics which impress upon language that which we call style.

'The whole nature of the man,' wrote the late Archbishop Magee, 'will give him his own style, and nothing else can give it.'

Yet to what end did Demosthenes seven times copy out the works of Thucydides? Was it not to acquire the qualities of a particular style peculiar to the Greek Historian that commended themselves to the orator?

Yes, by reading, and especially by reading aloud, such works as have enriched the literature of this or a bygone

age, the mind is familiarized with the elegancies and refinements of style, of harmony and rhythm of language ; so that we shall at length attain a language similar to theirs, a language in which there will be embodied with more or less prominence, proportionate to our acquaintance with them, those excellencies of style or diction which have characterized theirs.

This process of imitation is instinctive. Similarly, by coming into constant touch with those among whom we live we intuitively catch up their manner of speech, be it elegant or inelegant.

In like manner, by frequent converse with other men's minds through the language of books we intuitively assume their very form of expression, our language being assimilated to theirs.

Lord Brougham, advocating the study of good literary models, in his letter to

the father of the late Lord Macaulay, writes :

'I do earnestly intreat your son to set daily and nightly before him the Greek models. First of all he may look to the best modern speeches. He must make the absolutely perfect and most chaste and severe composition familiar to his mind. His taste will improve every time he *reads and repeats to himself* (for he should have the finer passages by heart), and he will learn how much may be done by a skilful use of a few words, and a rigorous rejection of all superfluities.'

Abbé Bautain, Vicar-General and Professor at the Sorbonne, urges upon the student of the art of extempore speaking the necessity of committing to memory the finest passages in great writers, so as to be able to recite them in moments of leisure. 'By reading,' he writes, 'the

beautiful lines of Corneille and Racine, Bossuet's majestic and pregnant sentences, the harmonious and cadenced compositions of Fénelon and Massillon, we gradually and without effort acquire a language approaching theirs, and imitate them instinctively, through the natural attraction of the beautiful and the propensity to reproduce whatever pleases; and at last, by repeating the exercise daily for years, one attains a refined taste for the delicacies of language, and the shades of style, just as a palate accustomed to the flavours of the most exquisite viands can no longer endure the coarser.'

CHAPTER VII.

HOW TO ATTAIN FLUENCY—*continued.*

Method III.—Substitution.

OF the three methods which I have here ventured to submit for the extension of our vocabulary, none can lay claim to originality, except the one I am now about to introduce.

For want of a better name it may be termed 'substitution.'

Convinced of its permanent and practical value, if adopted, it is with the utmost confidence that I submit it for trial. But do not let it be for a moment supposed that this method should be fully applied to all

our reading—far from it. To do this were to make our reading infinitely laborious and needlessly irksome ; I only suggest its frequent use as a practical method for rapidly extending our vocabulary.

It will of necessity involve some expenditure of time and add to the labour of our reading ; but what of that, if we shall have helped to lay the foundation of a complete mastery over our mother-tongue, to which this is an invaluable aid.

It is closely allied to, but differs from, paraphrasing. The latter consists in embodying the same thoughts in a different and often more ample phraseology ; but the former, while retaining, for the most part, the same phraseology, introduces by substitution only an occasional change of a word or words, where permitted, *i.e.*, by the substitution of *synonyms*.

The method is this : when reading to

interpret the author's thoughts, and taking his words as they occur, to substitute, where admissible, an occasional word or words having a precisely equivalent meaning—*i.e.*, by the introduction or substitution of synonyms.

The elasticity of our language freely admits of this. As our own thoughts are susceptible of a varied mode of interpretation, so the thoughts of others may be very differently expressed, without necessarily using a different phraseology, but merely by the introduction of a series of synonyms, or the substitution of different words, though equivalent in meaning, into the same phraseology.

It were better for this purpose to read aloud or in an audible whisper than silently.

Subjoined are a few examples illustrating the theory.

In each example the original word or

words will be found in capitals: the substituted ones in italics and parentheses.

Example 1.

'If any of you LACK (*need, or are in want of*) wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men LIBERALLY (*freely, unstintingly, bountifully*) and UPBRAIDETH (*chideth, reproveth*) not.'—ST. JAMES i. 5.

'For what is your life? It is even a VAPOUR (*a mere mist, or exhalaltion*) that APPEARETH (*is visible or seen*) for a LITTLE TIME (*brief space, short duration*) and then VANISHETH (*disappeareth, dissolveth*) away.'—ST. JAMES iv. 14.

Example 2.

'The QUALITY (*attribute, or property*) of mercy
is not STRAINED (*forced*),
It DROPPETH (*descendeth naturally, unforcedly, or spontaneously*) as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is TWICE BLESSED (*endowed with a twofold or double blessing*);
It blesseth HIM THAT GIVES AND HIM THAT TAKES (*both the giver and the recipient*):
'Tis MIGHTIEST (*most powerful, or potent*) in the MIGHTIEST (*those of highest, or most exalted rank*); it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.

His sceptre SHOWS THE FORCE (*is the emblem, or symbol*) of temporal power,
The ATTRIBUTE (*quality, or property which attaches*) to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth SIT (*reside or dwell*) the dread and fear of kings ;
But mercy is ABOVE (*transcends, surpasses*) this sceptred sway ;
It is ENTHRONED (*it reigns, or has its empire*) in the hearts of kings.
It is an attribute to God Himself ;
And earthly power doth then SHOW LIKEST (*most resembles*) God's
When mercy SEASONS (*tempers, moderates, or influences*) justice.'—*Merchant of Venice.*

Example 3.

'TO BE, OR NOT TO BE (*to live, or not to live*), that is the QUESTION) *subject of deliberation, contemplation or reflection*) :
Whether 'tis NOBLER IN THE MIND (*more characteristic of true nobility, or elevation of soul*), to SUFFER (*bear, or passively endure*)
The slings and arrows of OUTRAGEOUS (*violent, furious*) fortune,
Or to TAKE UP ARMS AGAINST (*actively or bravely oppose or resist*) a SEA OF TROUBLES (*a host of troubles which threatens to overwhelm us*),

And, by opposing, end them? To die—to sleep;
No more; and by a sleep to say we END (*terminate*)
The heart-ache, and the THOUSAND NATURAL SHOCKS (*countless natural ills*)
That FLESH IS HEIR TO (*incident to our nature*);
'tis a CONSUMMATION (*end, or completion*)
DEVOUTLY (*fervently, ardently, earnestly*) to be wish'd. To die,—to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the RUB (*obstacle or hindrance*);
For in that sleep of Death what DREAMS (*phantasies of the brain*) may come
When we have SHUFFLED OFF (*thrown off, or divested ourselves of*) this MORTAL COIL, (*this tenement of clay with which the soul is clothed or enwrapped*),
Must GIVE US PAUSE (*cause us to hesitate or seriously reflect*): there's the RESPECT (*or consideration*)
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the WHIPS AND SCORNS (*the insults and derisive mockery*) of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the PROUD MAN'S CONTUMELY (*insolence, or contempt*),
The PANGS OF DESPISED LOVE (*the suffering, anguish, torture of unrequited love*), the law's delay,
The INSOLENCE OF OFFICE (*impudence, or*

haughty bearing that sometimes attaches to office),
and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his QUIETUS MAKE
(*voluntarily end his existence*)
With a bare bodkin?
Who would FARDELS (*burthens or oppressive cares*)
bear,
To GRUNT AND SWEAT (*groan and toil*) under
a weary life;
But that the DREAD (*fear, or terror*) of some-
thing after death,
The UNDISCOVER'D (*undisclosed, unrevealed*)
country from whose BOURN (*boundary, limit
or confine*)
No traveller returns, PUZZLES (*embarrasses, per-
plexes*) the will,
And makes us rather BEAR (*passively submit to*)
those ills we have,
Than FLY (*escape*) to others that we know not of?'

Hamlet.

The foregoing few examples will suffice to show how elastic is our language, and how flexible and pliant it may become upon our tongue.

Let it not be supposed that I claim in-

fallibility in my interpretation of the foregoing authors. I have, however, endeavoured to adhere closely to what I conceive to be the author's meaning, and to be strictly accurate in the choice of appropriate synonyms.

No author lends himself more to this practice of 'substitution' than Shakespeare, from the unparalleled power with which he wields our language and in the rich diffusiveness with which words susceptible of substitution are scattered over his pages.

To read aloud a play of his enriches our language, while to turn and twist (not *distort*) his language into various forms of expression by the free use of synonyms, where applicable, will give an elasticity to our own equalled perhaps by no other method.

I might here suggest that the Clarendon Press Series of Shakespearian Manuals has appended to each one copious explanatory

notes which abound in synonyms. To have in hand one of these Manuals when reading Shakespeare would obviate the necessity of constant reference to a dictionary, and so be a saving of both time and labour. But by no means dispense with the use of the dictionary.

I have already said that it is not necessary so to experiment upon every line; this were to make our reading unnecessarily irksome. But by no means should we omit the 'substitution' wherever a word occurs of doubtful meaning, so that its certain meaning may be fixed upon the memory; also wherever a phrase is used which strikes us as unusually felicitous.

By this practice of 'substitution' there will be added to our vocabulary and incorporated into our language words and phrases which before had but a nebulous or uncertain existence, or no existence at all.

Care must be taken to give the precise equivalent or meaning of the term substituted. There must be an intense accuracy of words. 'You must get into the habit,' says Ruskin, 'of looking intensely at words and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable, nay, letter by letter.'

We may sometimes be tempted to depart from this rule, and to substitute a word that is not a precise equivalent, but one which bears only an approximate meaning. This must be studiously avoided. Only the precise equivalent of a word should be used. No approximate meaning will subserve the purpose of extempore speaking, and consequently of true oratory.

It is not enough merely to have enlarged our vocabulary. There must be that intense accuracy in the use of words and appropriateness of expression, else if

we be betrayed into an inaccuracy of expression we shall be wanting in one of the chief characteristics of true oratory, viz., perspicuity of diction.

This method of substitution may be applied, more or less, to all our reading. True oratory demands a perfect mastery of language, which implies a precise knowledge of each separate word we use.

To gain this knowledge we should never pass by a word of whose precise meaning we are not absolutely certain.

For this purpose it were well to have constantly at our side a standard Etymological Dictionary for reference, that we may be able to trace the derivation of a word and learn its appropriate synonyms.

Then, having ascertained its exact meaning, we should dwell upon it till we have fixed it so indelibly in the mind as not to perplex us when it again occurs.

The practice will at first seem tedious. The same may be said of every new habit when forming. But when once the habit is formed it will cease to be tedious, and words will obtrude themselves upon the mind with an alacrity and appositeness which can leave no doubt as to the efficacy of the method used.

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL PREPARATION.

BE the speaker's oratorical gifts what they may, he can never dispense with the utmost care in preparation. Be his audience educated or uneducated, the cultured and uncultured mind are alike quick to discern between a slovenly-prepared table of 'empty husks,' and a table replete with the choicest viands.

Our discourse should be the outcome of constant, habitual reading and thought, and not the 'extorted boon of a special search.' Our preparation must therefore be both *general* and *particular*, but less particular than general.

For if our mind be actively and vigorously exercised only in the effort to prepare the periodic weekly sermon, for a few brief hours before its actual delivery, or in the less frequent effort to produce an occasional speech or discourse, while in the intervals between such efforts all real mental exertion be suspended and our faculties lie fallow, it were folly to affect surprise if our efforts prove abortive.

The success of an extempore speaker depends more upon his general habits than upon the particular preparation which is necessary for each individual effort. His preparation must be both general *and* particular, but less particular than general.

Now, as to *general* preparation. This implies the daily or constant cultivation of the general habits of reading, writing, and speaking.

1. *Reading.*—It is necessary to cultivate the general habit of reading a variety of themes in order both to store the mind with the rich treasures of a diversified knowledge, and for the cultivation of all its faculties. The wider the range of subjects which the mind traverses, the more versatile is the speaker. The wider the limits within which the intellect moves, the greater his freedom of utterance and pliancy of speech.

The Bishop of Ripon, in his 'Lectures on Preaching,' writes: 'The cultivation of all our intellectual endowments should be our aim. Reason, knowledge, imagination, affection should be trained into strength and use.'

In the judgment of Cicero, the orator should be familiar with all sciences, and have his mind replete with various kinds of knowledge. What Cicero meant was the

greater his breadth of knowledge and of thought, the greater is his power to sway the minds and emotions of men.

'Reading maketh a full man.' Such is the aphorism of Bacon. And if our mind be well stored with the rich treasures of thought, we shall have paved the way to the attainment of a fluent expression of thought. '*Rerum enim copia verborum copiam gignit.*' Yes; the ampler or more universal our knowledge, the greater our readiness of speech. Affluence of thought may beget, but it does not necessarily imply, a fluency of language. To be a ready speaker, then, it is essential that our knowledge be both varied and extensive, so as to be able at any moment spontaneously to speak with tolerable ease on any ordinary topic.

The mind must be trained to habits of severe and well-sustained thought. But

those habits are formed not by spasmodic, intermittent mental exertion, but by constant, systematic and vigorous exercise of all our mental powers.

To this end, the mind must be always kept awake and active with reading, investigating, and reflecting, more especially with reflecting.

'For God's sake, gentlemen, I beseech you to think,' was the forcible appeal of Demosthenes.

Read nothing without reflecting upon it. By reflection ideas are perceived by, and impressed upon, the mind; for 'Ideas,' says Locke, 'are nothing but actual perceptions in the mind.'

To read without reflecting is to lose the ideas which would otherwise be imprinted upon the mind. Whereas, if ideas are adequately impressed upon the mind by reflection, they are laid up in the 're-

pository of the memory,' in which they may be revived in response to the impulse of the will. This mental perception of ideas is one of the secrets which underlie the whole art of extempore speaking.

2. *Writing*.—Another qualification essential to the extempore speaker is habitual writing. It has been truly said that a successful speaker must be an industrious writer.

The use of the pen gives us a mastery over our own thoughts and words: it defines our ideas, prevents inexactitude, and promotes accuracy and clearness of thought. With its aid we can better study the sequence of thought upon thought, the harmony of parts, and lucidity of expression. 'It promotes exactitude,' says the Bishop of Ripon, 'and so makes us truly masters of our thoughts. It may be taken

as a standing rule that no man can afford to do without his pen in the modelling of his sermons.'

By writing, an opportunity is thus afforded us of garnishing our sentences, rounding our periods, 'pruning away redundancies,' and of attaining a greater accuracy of thought and method. 'All the greatest speakers,' said the late Archbishop Magee, 'write, and write constantly. Only thus can you acquire accuracy, terseness, and force. Never give up the habit, and the constant habit, of writing.' 'Writing maketh an exact man,' wrote Bacon.

No amount of talent or natural oratorical power should supersede the use of the pen. Without it, a speaker, however gifted, is liable to degenerate into a lax and slovenly style.

Among the ancients the use of the pen

was of common practice. 'The pen is the orator's best instructor,' said Cicero. 'Without this,' said Quintilian, 'public speaking becomes mere empty garrulousness.'

That this was so is testified by the fact that some of the preserved orations of Cicero were never delivered at all.

There are those who by the power of intellectual abstraction can mentally compose without embodying their ideas in *written* speech. But they are few who can carry on the work of the mind in literary composition without the use of the pen.

Again, the man whose pen is in constant use on various themes will be the man most fully equipped to discourse. He will speak with greater freedom and range of thought than he whose habit is only to write what he is about to deliver. The former has ampler resources to draw from,

and so a less limited range within which his mind and tongue move, because his preparation has been less particular than general.

3. *Speaking.* — No habit more subserves the art of speaking extempore than that of turning into our own language the thoughts of others which we have just read. For no practice more favours the concentration of the mental powers than that of extempore speaking itself, and for this reason it is a more efficient preparation for it than any other.

But the power of concentration, in whatever degree possessed, depends upon mental habits as well as upon mental endowments.

In any case that habit must be acquired whereby we can look so intently at a subject as to be able promptly to bring out its

leading parts; to apply the mind with vigour, and focus its powers upon a subject to the exclusion of any other.

There is no practice more conducive to the formation of this habit of concentration than that of rising from the thoughts which occupy our attention, and repeating them audibly to ourselves clothed in the language of our own creation.

The very act of speaking implies concentration, more or less, of our mental powers, without which it were impossible even to apprehend the subject, much more impossible to embody it in words.

The act of speaking extempore imposes upon us the necessity of applying the mind with vigour; and the greater the vigour with which we can fix our attention upon our subject, the more deeply we can become absorbed in it, the more quickly and faithfully will our mind work in

grasping, analyzing, and arranging our discourse.

'Now that course of study is the best,' writes Dr. Ware in 'Hints on Extemporaneous Preaching,' 'which most favours this vigour of attention ; and the habit of extemporaneous speaking is more than anything favourable to it, from the necessity which it imposes of applying the mind with energy and thinking promptly.'

In this consists its inestimable value to a speaker. As a method, therefore, of mental training, of imparting to the mind that power of vigorous application and prompt analysis, it is perhaps attainable in the same degree by no other possible method.

Assuming our reading to be varied, to speak upon each subject while the thoughts are still fresh in the memory, and reproduce them in our own language, with the

same sequence of thought, but amplified by such additions, variations and comments as our mind may at the moment suggest, is the most effectual means whereby the mind will gain in concentration and breadth of thought.

The facility of mentally grasping a subject, both in its entirety and broken parts on which we have to enlarge, will increase with each succeeding effort.

The task will be irksome at first, when the mind will be found to move somewhat slowly, but it will gradually gain in power of application proportioned to the vigour with which the mind is applied.

Minds are differently constituted ; some can grasp a subject and discern at a glance its salient points with ease and promptitude. Others there are to whom it is a laboured mental process.

In either case, that this essential power

of concentration may become a mental habit we must be constantly and actively engaged in reading, investigating and analyzing.

In this manner the memory is stored with the choice treasures of other men's thoughts, while the tongue will rapidly gain in pliancy of utterance, and the mind in power of concentration.

'The celebrated orator, Henry Clay,' writes the Rev. Dr. Burgess in 'The Art of Preaching,' 'is said to have obtained proficiency by this plan. He began his studies of oratory comparatively late in life, but he then adopted the practice of daily reading good authors, and then speaking aloud on their contents.'

Sir Samuel Romilly, also, in one of his letters writes: 'I adopted a very useful expedient, suggested in Quintilian, that of expressing myself, in the very best

language I could, whatever I had been reading.'

As he who has acquired the habit of writing on general subjects will have acquired a wider range of thought, so by parity of reasoning he who cultivates the habit of speaking on general topics will speak with ampler freedom and ease.

Seize hold of every opportunity that offers for the expression of thought, particularly in expressing yourself on ordinary topics in common intercourse with your fellow men. Unless you can discourse readily on familiar topics of everyday life, far less can you on themes which exact deeper, abstruser thought and more unfamiliar language. Embrace every opportunity of entering, though unobtrusively, into the conversation of others.

Think clearly, and express yourself pertinently and easily. Weigh well your

words in the scales of grammatical nicety. Eschew all slovenliness of expression, and model and polish your sentences with the same care as if you were speaking before the most exacting and critical audience.

CHAPTER IX.

PARTICULAR PREPARATION.

NOW as to *particular* preparation, Cicero's second requisite for 'effective oratory' is that we 'arrange the order' of what we have to say.

Before we speak a word in public the plan of our discourse should exist in the mind as a complete whole. Its component parts, principal and subordinate, must be clearly perceived and arranged. There must be a perfect sequence of ideas following one another in a connected train of thought. No haziness must obscure our thoughts when we rise to speak. For we cannot possibly present in a form at

once clear and intelligible to the minds of others what is at all nebulous and unintelligible to our own mind. *Nemo potest de eâ re, quam non novit, non turpissime dicere.*

'If a man,' said Archbishop Magee, 'is ever to preach well, he must think out his subject logically and consecutively, so that one part necessarily follows from the other. If he is not prepared he is certain to be swept away by the fatal current of words so as to make a clear and orderly arrangement impossible.'

If we possess a competent knowledge of our subject, and are thoroughly conversant with it in all its minutest details, we shall have paved the way to an easy delivery.

In proportion as our knowledge is slender or full will our delivery be laborious or easy.

No greater barrier could be interposed

between a speaker and his hearers than mental poverty, or an imperfect knowledge of his subject.

This is the secret of many a failure in speaking, whereas if the subject be thoroughly grasped, as the result of much study and meditation, we shall be forced into the expression of what we comprehend with a readiness proportioned to our knowledge of the subject and our power of language.

To be practical, how should we set about the preparation of a *particular* discourse?

I will offer a few rules which are based both upon the collective opinions of eminent authorities on the subject, and on practical experience.

1. Choose your subject. Have it in your mind as long as possible before you

commit it to paper. Reflect upon it. Revolve it again and again in the mind. This will give birth to ideas. And ideas will beget ideas. Thought will yield thought with astonishing fertility when we concentrate all the powers of our mind upon a subject. For the 'mind,' writes the Rev. J. P. Sandlands in 'The Voice and Public Speaking,' 'is the soil, so to speak, in which thoughts germinate and grow.' And that which at first seemed to us vague and indefinite will, as it is mentally revolved, take a tangible and definite form in the mind.

Then commit your thoughts to paper. Record them as they occur, for thoughts are fleeting things. I am speaking now only of ideas as they rise promiscuously in the mind, without any arrangement of them or harmony of parts. This arrangement need not at first be observed, but will

follow in due course. Enough if at first thoughts be forthcoming, without regard to order or language.

The ideas may be our own or those of others. But better that we exhaust our own ideas before we have recourse to those of others. If our own resources prove inadequate we may legitimately seek to obtain through other channels the necessary knowledge, in order to supplement our own.

We suppose that we have now before us brief notes of our accumulated knowledge. Our thoughts have been promiscuously thrown together on paper. In these lie the materials of our discourse. From out this chaos we have to evolve order. It has been well said, 'Without order in a discourse you cannot get into your subject, and without good order you cannot get out of it.'

2. Draw up your skeleton plan, *i.e.*, reduce the thoughts to an orderly arrangement in this way. Write out the plan or outline of your discourse carefully on paper before it be written *in extenso*. This plan is, of course, subject to modification which may be rendered necessary by the birth of new ideas which may arise in the mind during the process of expansion.

In your plan mark the divisions, principal and subordinate. Every subject is susceptible of such divisions and subdivisions. For on examination of our subject it will be found that some ideas will stand out in greater prominence than others. These form the leading ideas around which those less prominent have to be grouped.

Care must be taken that in each division only those ideas which strictly belong

to it be placed there. Reject all foreign and extraneous matter.

3. Now proceed to write your discourse more or less *in extenso* on the lines of the skeleton plan before you. In other words, 'clothe the skeleton.' Write as you would wish to speak with an imaginary audience always before you.

'I never preach any new sermon,' wrote Archbishop Magee, 'of which I have not written out a large part.'

The necessity of writing lies in the fact that by it we give greater definiteness to our thoughts; we make them permanent, and are able to take a more comprehensive view of our subject in its several phases.

'If you want to know whether you are thinking rightly, put your thoughts into words. It forces us to think clearly, even when it cannot make us think correctly.'*

* J. S. Mill.

'We believe,' wrote the Rev. D. Moore, 'they are very few who know what all the bearings of an argument will be, or how a mentally-conceived illustration will work out, till they have put down their thoughts upon paper. There is a haziness which the clearer medium of written thought would help to disperse.'

As you write new thoughts will suggest themselves, and your subject will grow upon you and expand into unexpected proportions.

Having written it, read it carefully over again and again, making any necessary additions or emendations. It should be read aloud, so that any defect which offends the ear may be at once detected and removed. Any faultiness in euphony or expression may pass unobserved in the written sentence, but when read aloud is easily detected by the ear.

Regard should of course be had to style. 'Style is simply the beauty of the truth itself, when you have gone deep enough to find it; and the worst condemnation of a careless and unattractive style is that it does the truth injustice.'* Each perusal affords the opportunity of 'rounding our periods,' and embellishing with all the elegancies of a graceful diction. But force, perspicuity and brevity should be our chief aim, to which all else should be subordinated.

4. Now abandon altogether the full manuscript, and rely only upon your skeleton plan. It may be that this, too, is susceptible of being reduced. Condense it then as far as practicable. Retain only the bare heads and such words under each head as will suggest the connected train of thought.

* Stalker.

The fewer the divisions and subdivisions there are the better. To overburden the memory with too many branches of a subject will perplex the mind in its effort to remember, and so prejudicially hamper it in its operations, to the confusion and probable failure of the speaker.

Finally, write out afresh your skeleton plan, which may or may not coincide with the original one. Condense it to the barest analysis of the subject. In this analysis write the main divisions in large, bold letters, but the subdivisions in a less prominent type, so that the whole may stand out in bold relief before the mind's eye at the time of speaking.

With this analysis before you, go *mentally* through your entire subject again and again, till it assume in the mind a complete and tangible form. See your ideas. On this power of mental vision

depends your success in extemporaneous speech more than upon anything else. See your ideas clearly. Lay them up in the 'repository of the memory.'

Link them together in due sequence of thought upon thought by the association of ideas. This forms the subject of a subsequent chapter.

'Their proper sequence,' wrote Professor Plumptre, 'may be aided by carrying out the principle of the association of ideas as the most powerful of all the aids to memory.'

Recur to your analysis again and again. Burn it into your memory. Keep it constantly before the eye, so that when you come to speak you will have it vividly in your mind's eye, when 'the very words and letters of your skeleton will rise before you.'

One word more as to the analysis. Whether your notes be borne in the

memory or in the hand, the briefest, barest possible should be used. Copious notes should be discarded altogether. They impose narrow limits within which thought and speech must rigidly move. Where therefore these limits are imposed there cannot be any freedom, either of thought or expression. Neither mind nor soul has full scope for the expression of thought or feeling.

Remove then the limits which copious notes prescribe, and the free flow of thought and feeling will know no bounds.

Oftentimes, in the heat of earnest, fervid eloquence, the mind is borne along by the tide of oratorical flow, thought begetting thought with surprising fertility and appositeness.

The foregoing rules may be briefly summed up thus :

1. Choose your subject, reflect upon it, and record your ideas.

2. Draw up your skeleton plan.

3. Write out your discourse more or less *in extenso.*

4. Draw up your final analysis, abandon your manuscript, and, with the analysis before you, go *mentally* through your discourse again and again before the time of delivery.

CHAPTER X.

MENTAL VISION.

OF all the secrets that underlie the art of extempore speaking, none is of so transcendent importance as mental vision, or seeing ideas with the mind. But how can anything so abstract and intangible as a thought or idea be seen with the mind? Through the medium of *words*.

When I define mental vision as seeing ideas *through the medium of words*, I may be considered sufficiently heterodox in my opinion as to provoke adverse criticism on the part of those who define it as seeing ideas *apart from words*.

I venture to affirm that we cannot think

without words, because we are unable to clearly define our ideas without them, much less carry on the process of abstract thought without their use.

True it is that some ideas may reach the mind through the avenues of sense. For instance, through the sense of sight the ideas of colour are impressed upon the mental retina ; through the sense of touch, those of heat and cold. Yet even then names quite unconsciously affix themselves to these ideas.

But where a succession of ideas is present to the mind by the mental process of reflection, that process can only be carried on by the use of words.

'We cannot,' writes Professor Max Müller, 'think without words. As soon as we can tell what we are thinking about, the forgotten or muffled words are there at once, and thought as soon as it becomes

conscious, becomes worded. . . . Thinking is nothing but speaking *minus* words.'

In support of his theory, propounded in an article already alluded to on page 24, he brings to bear upon it an overwhelming weight of testimony from Plato downwards. With such a preponderance of opinion on my side, surely my position is not altogether an untenable one.

It has been observed that there are those who 'cannot think till they put their thoughts into words'—that is, not till they assume a real, tangible form. Clothe your thoughts with words, and you impart to them a real, substantive form.

Words are the embodiment of thought. Invest thought with that embodiment, and you give to it a substantive reality, something which the mind can see and readily apprehend. But divest thought of speech, and you grasp at a shadow. Words give

shape and substance to the unshaped thought which else were vague and formless. Till thought takes this substantive form there can be no clear mental vision, without which there can be no lucidity of thought, and without lucidity of thought there can be no clear expression of thought. All haziness of thought is at once dispersed if viewed through the clear medium of words.

Words serve as a mental mirror in which we see the reflection of our thoughts. Words are not thoughts. But by focusing or concentrating the intellectual forces upon a subject, our ideas are seen through the clearer medium of words. And the greater the vigour or concentrated energy which the mind applies, the clearer is the reflection, and the clearer the reflection, the more permanent its impression upon the mental retina.

The working of thought in the mind of a person *silently* reading may be sometimes observed in the involuntary movement of the lips, thus indicating the unconscious use of words to facilitate the process of thought.

Without any such movement of the lips or mouth only think in words. Put your thoughts into unspoken words and they will at once take definite shape, and the process of thinking will be thereby facilitated by embodying thought even with *unspoken* words.

If, as not infrequently happens, the mind be sluggish, and the mind's ideas consequently vague and formless, only think aloud in *spoken* words and the working of thought in the mind is rendered easier, since thought becomes clear, definite and precise by the use of words. For the same reason the use of the pen is, and has

been, almost universally adopted by great speakers. Writing gives us a mastery over our thoughts by helping us to make our thoughts *real* as distinguished from *vague fancies*.

CHAPTER XI.

MEMORY.

MEMORY, or the power to revive at will ideas which have been impressed upon the mind, plays a prominent part in extemporaneous speech. 'What we want to attain,' wrote the late Archbishop Magee, 'is a memory for *ideas*.' Yes, for ideas, not for words; these should spontaneously offer themselves with the least possible effort of thought.

Unless equipped with this power to revive in the mind past impressions, we shall labour in vain to reproduce those ideas which it is our wish to embody in speech. And without ideas words are

worthless, and speech mere verbosity. The gift of memory, in varying degrees, most men have; but in whatever degree possessed it is susceptible of improvement, and the greater the mind's impressibility or capacity to retain the imprint of ideas, the greater the facility of extemporaneous speech.

Like all other mental faculties, that of memory is strengthened and enlarged only by habitual use or persistent practice. 'It is practice alone,' writes Locke, 'that brings the powers of the mind as well as those of the body to their perfection.' To exercise the memory is to enlarge and strengthen its powers.

As a mnemonic exercise read regularly from some standard work; then throw it aside and take a mental survey of the whole.

In this survey carefully review the ideas in the same successive order in which read,

with the same sequence of thought upon thought. By thus focussing the mental powers upon a given subject the memory for ideas is strengthened, and the power of concentration is gained.

Another mnemonic exercise, equally unfailing in its results, is to commit to memory day by day not only the ideas of an author, but also the words, be they but few. '*Mandare memoriæ*' is one of Cicero's '*quinque quasi membra eloquentiæ*.'

A few lines daily committed to memory will rapidly enlarge its capacity, and yield increased facilities for remembering both words and ideas.

What an extempore speaker requires above all things else is a retentive memory which will vividly flash forth from the hidden chambers of the mind, in swift obedience to the will, the ideas which have been deposited there. Now, vividness of

perception and the degree of concentration alike determine the mind's readiness to revive at will the impress of ideas.

It is not enough to see ideas if we would retain them. They must be registered in the mind by keeping them in view, and vigorously concentrating the mental forces upon them sufficiently long to fix them in the memory.

CHAPTER XII.

ASSOCIATION OF IDEAS.

OUR mind may be replete with ideas upon the subject on which we are about to speak, and those ideas may be cast into an intelligible and logical form in the mind. But how shall we, during the mental process of speaking, preserve that form, and prevent our ideas issuing from the mind in a promiscuous and disjointed manner subversive of their proper sequence?

Some method of preserving the continuity and train of thought there must be, else there will inevitably happen a confusion of ideas and want of clearness than which nothing is more disastrous to a speaker.

The leading ideas should be both committed to the memory and linked together there in their proper sequence of thought upon thought in such a manner that each such thought shall recall or suggest the next. 'What we want to attain is a memory for ideas—so to construct your discourse that the ideas should grow one out of another by a natural and orderly sequence which will make it easy to remember the arrangement of the discourse.'*

Now the most powerful of all aids to the memory, in this sequence of thought upon thought, is the principle of the association of ideas.

To illustrate this principle I propose treating it separately in the next chapter, taking for consideration the parable of The Prodigal Son, presuming to give my own analysis of the subject. The fuller

* Magee.

treatment of the subject may be seen in my work published by the S.P.C.K. under the title of 'Evangelium in Evangelio.'

CHAPTER XIII.

ANALYSIS OF THE SUBJECT.

THIS chapter is intimately connected with the last, inasmuch as its object is to illustrate the principle of the association of ideas. For this purpose the parable of The Prodigal Son is chosen, as being a subject which is easily accessible to my readers.

I will now give the bare analysis, or skeleton, and then proceed to deal briefly with it, as illustrating the principle of the association of ideas, by which ideas may be linked in the memory.

This analysis can, of course, be extended both ways, by the exordium and peroration,

the introduction and conclusion. But I hold it were better to carry these in the mind, apart from the analysis, which will render easier the mind's remembrance of the four leading ideas.

Observe that the leading ideas are written in large, bold type, while the subordinate ones are in less prominent letters.

ANALYSIS.

I. SIN { Journey. Will. Grief.

II. MISERY { Famine. Want.

III. PENITENCE { Conviction. Confession. Conversion.

IV. FORGIVENESS { Father's. Full.

In this parable we have the moral history of a sinful soul in the fourfold aspect of its SIN, its MISERY, its PENITENCE and its FORGIVENESS. The story, therefore, resolves itself into four parts. These parts form the leading ideas. And each such idea is a centre of thought round which revolve those which germinate from it.

There is here a perfect sequence of thought between the leading ideas, *e.g.*, SIN is followed by MISERY as a necessary sequence, as PENITENCE is by FORGIVENESS.

Each leading thought, therefore, suggests the next.

These four main divisions, then, must be burned into the memory, so that they will rise vividly before the mind when speaking.

Around these four main divisions gather the germinating thoughts, each of which,

represented by a single word, should also be fixed in the memory, and retained there by the aid of the principle of association. These form the subdivisions.

Division I. SIN.—Let us take the first leading idea connoted by the word *sin*. *Sin* is a central thought, around which there revolve the ideas which germinate from it, as suggested by the words *journey*, *will*, and *grief*.

The sequence of thought is this: the *sin* of the prodigal consists in his taking a *journey* into a far-off land of forgetfulness of his father, implying thereby a perverted affection in the renunciation of the tender home ties and moral restraints which paternal affection imposed upon him.

This thought is closely allied with the next, inasmuch as that journey was taken against the *will* of the father. This is

our second point: The father's was not a willing acquiescence in the son's departure; it was the son's own choice. But what could it avail to stay him at home whose heart was already estranged from it? Better were it that he should go out into the cold, unsympathetic world, and there learn, in that painful school of rigid, yet salutary, discipline, how wholly unavailing are all the pleasures of this world to make up for the loss of a father's love.

The fact of the son's ingratitude and departure against his father's will naturally suggests the father's *grief*, which brings us to our third point.

Under the word *grief* we describe the feelings of the broken-hearted father, lingering upon the threshold of his door, casting a fond and last look at his rebellious son, and then, turning into his house, we see him in the solitude of his chamber picturing

to his mind the downward career of his loved son, while tear upon tear steals down the old man's cheeks.

This finishes the first division.

Division II. MISERY.—Now there is a natural connectedness of thought between the first and second divisions. The link is this: *Sin* naturally produces *misery*. The *misery* consists in the *famine* which is fast gnawing away the flesh from his bones. The 'husks' cannot appease his hunger. They may 'fill his belly' even to repletion, but they will not satisfy the deep needs of his nature. This will at once suggest to us a sense of *want*—that aching void in the human heart which is felt even after we have reached the highest summit of our earthly ambition, and enjoyed the keenest pleasures of life.

Division III. PENITENCE. — The third leading idea is that of *penitence*, and

the link in the association of ideas is this, that, while realizing that sense of *want*, there comes the *conviction* of past ingratitude and sin that leads to *confession* and ultimate *conversion*.

Here, it may be added, these three words may be linked in the mind by an additional aid to the memory—viz., by alliteration, the initial letters of the three words—*conviction*, *confession* and *conversion*—being the same. It catches the eye, and helps to fix them in the memory, if we place over these initial letters a distinguishing mark, say in red ink.

Division IV. FORGIVENESS.—True *penitence* naturally leads to *forgiveness*. This thought calls up in the mind the beautiful and touching pathos of the scene in which, after the severance of years, the father and son again meet. The *father* is speechless and unable to find

language to utter the fulness of his heart's feelings. The father's forgiveness is *full* and complete. There is no inquiry as to why he had come, no uncertain tones in the father's voice, nothing of reproach in the father's look.

Here, again, the use of alliteration in the words *forgiveness*, *father* and *full* will serve as an additional aid to fix them in the memory, and the same distinguishing mark may be used as suggested on the last page.

In this analysis is given the barest skeleton possible, for the fewer the words the better ; the mind will not be hampered with too many words. If you attempt to crowd the mind with words, you will ignominiously fail.

Above all, see your ideas mentally.

To recapitulate, recur to your analysis again and again. Burn it into your

memory. Keep it repeatedly before the *eye*, till through that member every word is registered in the brain. What is really *seen* is not so soon forgotten, but has a more lasting impression, and then it will be found that the analysis—'the very words and letters of your skeleton'—will rise vividly before the mind's eye at the time of speaking.

For the study of analysis or the resolution of a subject into its component parts, I know of no work more helpful to the student in extempore speech than Butler's 'Analogy of Religion.' In the edition issued by the Religious Tract Society each chapter is prefaced by an excellent analysis.

CHAPTER XIV.

BEGINNING OF THE DISCOURSE.

SPEAK your first sentences slowly and with deliberateness, because the audience are not as yet fully receptive of your ideas until yourself and they are *en rapport.*

Your own ideas, too, may flow sluggishly until that magnetic sympathy spring up between you and them by which you intuitively feel that you have enlisted the sympathies of your audience and are carrying them with you.

'The first sentences,' wrote an eminent authority on the subject, 'should be uttered with great slowness. Your audience is not at first ready to take in your ideas.'

Again, if you are at all apprehensive of stumbling or losing your self-possession, the best remedy or preventive against it is to speak with calm deliberation.

Or, if you have committed yourself by a momentary loss of thought, or thread of narrative or argument, the only sure way to recover is to pause and speak with the utmost deliberation—*ut tamen deliberare, non hesitare videatur*. The chances are that no one will suspect you, but will rather suppose it to be the prelude to a greater exertion of power. And you will not only recover yourself, but the effort to do it may be a stimulus to the mind, enabling you to proceed with renewed strength and energy.

Nothing can more aggravate the evil of stumbling than that of vainly attempting to recover one's self-possession.

CHAPTER XV.

ENDING OF THE DISCOURSE.

NO part of a discourse requires more skilful handling and careful study than the ending, or peroration, as it is commonly called. And nothing is more fatal to the success of a discourse than to prolong it unnecessarily beyond its due limits.

And yet not infrequently we hear a speaker end his speech three or four times. Or, having said all he intended to say, having exhausted all his ideas on the subject, he flounders about till he finds

himself irretrievably lost amid a maze of words and phrases. He then becomes painfully aware of the fact that he is addressing a listless and wearied audience. This adds to his discomfiture. Still, on and on he goes along the tortuous windings of empty words and phrases, till, in the recklessness of despair, he abruptly terminates he knows not how or where.

The inevitable result is an adverse opinion of the whole discourse, which otherwise had been, perhaps, highly or tolerably successful.

Many of our best speakers have not scrupled to admit that they have written and committed to memory the peroration to their most important or celebrated speeches.

'I composed,' wrote Lord Brougham, 'the peroration of my speech for the

Queen, in the Lords, twenty times over at least.'

What more weighty authority in the matter can we have than that of the late Archbishop Magee?

'Let a man,' he said, 'have a few sentences of conclusion carefully prepared. For a speaker this is of the greatest importance. It will prevent the necessity of hunting about painfully for an ending. Many a good sermon is completely spoilt from a man not knowing when and how to stop. Let these sentences be well considered, grave, earnest, terse and powerful.'

It may be a general summary or *résumé* of the subject.

This perhaps is the easiest method of concluding. It is one on which we may always safely rely. It consists in a recapitulation, or concentration, of the entire

subject, expressed in lucid brevity and vivid language, enforcing the truth of our convictions upon the minds and hearts of our hearers.

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