

the art of

READING
&
SPEAKING

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**THE ART
OF
READING AND SPEAKING**

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JAMES FLEMING

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

The demand for this book indicates that there is a strong desire for improved reading and speaking. I wish to thank many correspondents, from all parts of the world, who have taken so warm an interest in the subject on which I have sought to stir public opinion. Language is the greatest power in the world. It creates every other power. English is the most powerful tongue in the world to-day. Science, art, commerce, the intellect, the soul—all bask under it. To quicken its study has been my object in this book, and to raise the standard of speaking.

There is little to add to what I have written, which is the outcome of many years' practice and experience. But I wish to say to those who desire to train and strengthen their voice, that I believe the most successful speakers, as well as thinkers, have been those who were abstemious in eating and drinking. The two best tonics for the voice are Air and Water. Singers, as well as speakers, know that stimulants are not either good or necessary for the voice. We cannot squander our vital force in high living, and continue to preserve our best powers of thinking and speaking. I have no hesitation in telling students that two of the best friends to health, and therefore to the voice, are early rising and strictly abstemious habits.

JAS. FLEMING

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SIGNS USED TO ASSIST THE STUDENT.

- ／ Denotes the rising inflection of the voice.
- ＼ Denotes the falling inflection of the voice.
- ∪ Over a word denotes that it is read short.
 - Over a word denotes that it is read longer.
- ＞ Over a word gives it a strong emphasis.
 - After a word denotes that a pause is to be made.
- ∧ Falling circumflex, in which there is first an upward, then a downward slide of the voice.
- ∨ Rising circumflex, in which there is first a downward, then an upward slide in the voice.
- 〰 Tremor of the voice.

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CHAPTER I.

THE ART OF READING.*

‘To learn to read is the business of half a life.’

LORD MACAULAY.

LANGUAGE—written, heard, and spoken—of all subjects demands our attention. Its acquisition commences from the cradle; its practical application terminates only with life. To understand is the first step in the study of language; to express one’s self is the second. We must read and hear before we can speak and write, just as sowing comes before reaping. On the perfection of language depends that of all human knowledge. By perfection we mean, not the power of reaching it, but capability of ever advancing nearer to it. Our mother-tongue ought to hold in education a pre-eminence which, hitherto, has certainly been denied it, for it is in that tongue we have to think, to speak, to write. If we become pleaders, preachers or speakers, it must be in English. And yet, of all branches of study in our public schools, and also in our Universities, there is none so little fostered as that of cultured reading and good

* The author wishes to express his indebtedness to Arch-bishop Whately on ‘Rhetoric,’ Dr. Rush on ‘The Human Voice,’ Sheridan’s ‘Lectures,’ Marcel on ‘Language,’ Dr. Mc Queen, Dr. Russell, Dr. Bronson, J. Walker, John Hullah, and his friend the late W.C. Macready, the tragedian, to whom he owed much.

delivery. In this country, the pulpit, the senate, and the bar ought, from their position and many advantages, to be standard authorities; yet many who enter these are so ill-instructed themselves as to require from those condemned to listen to them the advice, 'Physician, heal thyself'. Surely, bad reading and indifferent speaking ought not to prevail in an era so remarkable for the expansion of intellect, and in a nation who rely more on the art of oratory than any people of modern times. Here and there may be found a few endowed by Nature with a voice of music and rich melody—the source of a speaker's fascination. Less labour is needed by those who are its happy possessors, but the great mass of us require an attention to the voice vastly more than it usually receives. Many who have charmed the world by the faculty of speech were originally endowed with little or no vocal power. It was only by laborious study and continuous practice that they grafted music into their voice. This is not the work of an hour or a day. It is the reward that comes to persevering labour. Demosthenes laboured under natural impediment in speech and extreme nervousness, yet by sheer force of will and indomitable practice he became a prince of orators. Nothing worth knowing is attained without labour.

If the writer of these pages can be of use to others, his efforts will not be lost. He aims at no originality. He only offers the experience of more than thirty years spent in learning for himself an art which he has not yet half mastered. His object is to help those who wish to follow the art of reading to rely less on the assistance of others, and to discover the varied sources of self-improvement; for the chief way in which written instructions can be of any use is to enable the student to teach himself. No doubt the art of reading is best cultivated by listening to good readers—if we can meet them. But good

reading and speaking in public are among the rarest qualities to be found. Good reading has been defined to be 'artificial speaking'*. The writer would rather define it to be 'natural speaking'. 'The highest art is to conceal art.' Eloquent reading is based on the model of eloquent speaking, and good reading is the language of Nature.

The writer, on the very threshold of his subject, protests with all his might against the tricks and quackery of elocution. To teach these would be to offer nostrums, not cures. He wishes to make none artificial or stilted, but to help all to be natural and real. The man must always be infinitely greater than the orator. More elocution is but a poor substitute for the living sympathy of the soul. The voice is but the instrument by which the man is to utter the thoughts of the mind; and it moves rich and poor alike with its magic, but only when the voice is the interpreter of thought. It may, perhaps, be objected by some that Divine truth needs no ornament to set off, and no art to enforce it. We may be told that the Apostles were artless and illiterate men, and yet they gained the end of their mission. To this an answer is, The Apostles were not all artless and illiterate. Paul was a giant, as writer and preacher. He must have been no mean orator, who made a Felix tremble; who made a heathen king exclaim, 'Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian'; who made a defence before the Court of Areopagus, which won a convert from the Court itself; who struck a whole multitude with such wonder that they thought him the God of Eloquence. Moreover, the Apostles had the Divine power resting on them—the power of working miracles. But now public instruction is the preacher's principal weapon with which to combat sin and infidelity. And what avails a weapon without skill to use it ?

* Rice on 'The Art of Reading.'

‘Art,’ says Bishop Hall, ‘imitates Nature, and the nearer it comes to Nature the more excellent it is.’ Cultivate your own powers; gather help from every source within your reach, but never try to be other than yourself. Speak so naturally that your words may go from the heart to the heart, and that people may forget the messenger while they listen to the message. Forget yourself entirely. Archbishop Tillotson, who has left imperishable memorials of his excellence in his sermons, as well as the traditional reports of his voice and delivery, regarded it as the highest compliment ever paid him when, in descending from the pulpit, he overheard a countryman, who came to London expressly to hear him, ask his friend, with evident surprise : ‘Is this your great Archbishop ? Why, he talks just like one of ourselves.’ There are few of us who, when speaking to a friend in private, do not utter our words naturally and earnestly. Why, then, should we, as soon as we speak in public, become unnatural, unreal, and monotonous ? And yet, if the words of some simple, earnest conversation spoken by friend to friend were written down, and given to the man to read, it would be found that he changed his whole manner. Tone, expression, emphasis, would be altogether different. The words read would become dull, flat, and unreal, wholly opposite to the words spoken just before. This fault must arise either from some natural or artificial cause. But there are no natural impediments in the way, for just now the friend spoke quite naturally to his friend. Therefore it must be artificial. In other words, our faults in reading are artificial, through bad methods of teaching, or bad habits contracted, and what we really need is to get back to Nature.

We have a convincing proof of this in barristers who, being under the necessity of pleading extemporaneously, by perseverance and practice come to speak in any cause with

ease and readiness. Whilst we clergy, on the contrary, who accustom ourselves to lean on written discourses, often deliver them in the most heartless, mindless, and conventional way. Indeed, some of us could not utter the Lord's Prayer if the Prayer-Book were not open before us. Such is the power of habit. And yet the writer, himself one of the working clergy, and sharing in their faults, is bold to assert that the clergy ought to be the standard of good reading and speaking. There is no Church which has such a divine service as ours. It is little short of being inspired, and the Saxon Bible is read in our mother-tongue in all our churches. Our advantages are unequalled. No other calling has such opportunities. We are heard—respectfully and without contradiction—by all classes; and were the clergy masters of the powers of speaking, the nation would take them as their models for reading and speaking. They cannot do so now.

I close this introductory chapter by saying :

IF WE WISH TO READ WELL, WE MUST FIRST LEARN HOW.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOICE.

‘Mira est natura vocis.’—CICERO, *De Oratore*.

SOMEONE has said, ‘The human voice lies midway between the lips and the heart, that all the light may fall from the lips, and all the love may well up from the heart.’

The voice is almost everything in speaking and reading. It is the exquisite instrument which responds to our feelings, and vibrates under the will of the speaker. I have always felt this in reading the greatest speeches of Burke, or Fox, or Pitt, or Canning. We almost wonder, as we read them on the printed page, how they moved the passions and swayed the judgment of vast audiences. Their grandest speeches seem dead without the living voice. We can read them, but we never heard them. No doubt they owed their power, at the time, to voice and delivery.

I do not propose to examine the nature of the voice in any scientific way, even if I could. In practical words on the art of reading, this is not necessary.

There are few confirmed opinions among writers on the mechanism of the human voice. It is composed of two classes of organs : the lower, vibrating organs; and the upper, articulating organs. The lower are the larynx and glottis, with

all their muscles, chords, and ligaments, which produce the voice. The upper are the throat, palate, tongue, teeth, and lips, which combine to articulate the words we utter with the voice. I wish rather to speak of its use than of its mechanism. It is the most perfect instrument in the world. It comes to us from the Divine hand. It is 'fearfully and wonderfully made.' We ought therefore to use it reverently. It possesses its sounding-board, chords, and notes, which are but imitated in the variety of musical instruments we hear, or in the *vox humana* stop on the organ. No pains should be spared on our part to develop and improve an instrument of such power and melody. I have found by my own experience that it is not a whit less necessary for the speaker than for the singer to improve the voice by daily use and constant practice; for the voice is capable of improvement by exercise, as the mind is by the reading of good authors. In fact, the muscles of the voice may be strengthened by use and training, as the muscles of the body are by walking, riding, or rowing. I have no hesitation in saying that he who subjects his voice to regular training will soon find that its tones, depth, flexibility, power of modulation, and even its compass, are all improved.

It is difficult indeed to determine the limits to which the voice may be developed. When we first wear new shoes, the leather is hard and unyielding, but by use they become as soft and pliable as India-rubber. A pair of gloves, when first used, take time and patience to get on; but when worn a few times they fit as if made expressly for the hand. And the voice trained, strengthened, and developed by daily exercise becomes as flexible as anything we wear or use, so that its possessor may modulate it in all its tones, high or deep, loud or soft, harsh or sweet, at will. But all this can only be done by systematic exercise. A runner or jumper finds that what he reached to-

day as a maximum he can pass to-morrow. The reason is that the fatigue of the previous day, if not too severe, will be entirely removed by a few hours of rest and sleep, whilst the benefit given to the muscles makes him one degree fleeter or stronger than yesterday. Just so it is with the voice. Never let it be strained or over-fatigued; but it is rendered more flexible and strong in its whole compass by the exercise of the previous day, followed by an interval of rest. It is true the voice may be in a condition of hoarseness, produced by a cold, and at such a time we must rest it. There can be no doubt that the clergy often suffer for the lack of daily use of the voice. The services on a Sunday are severe and exacting. They commence, probably, with Holy Communion at eight a.m., and are more or less continuous till evening. The building may be large, and it may tax the voice by necessary effort. Over-fatigue may be the consequence; and the voice, instead of being gently used the next day, is allowed to be idle. The clerical sore-throat may often be induced by this practice : whereas the voice that has daily exercise seldom, if ever, knows what it is to be over-fatigued. Without discipline and training, the voice is what the arm of the blacksmith would be without daily work.

It is a comfort for the busy man—and ours, is happily, a busy age—that the daily exercise of the voice need not entail much loss of time, if any. We have all some book we are reading. Half an hour of vocal exercise, by reading aloud instead of silently, will be found most beneficial in strengthening the voice for public use. I strongly recommend the younger men who wish to be students of the art of reading, to devote a fixed time daily to the systematic practice of reading aloud.

The human voice may be roughly divided into three parts which we all more or less possess : the middle, the higher and the lower; or, as sometimes described, the natural or chest

voice, the falsetto or head voice, and the orotund or deeper voice. The high voice is that which we use in calling to someone at a distance. The low voice is that which is formed deep in the throat, and which in its final words approaches towards a whisper. The natural voice is that in which mainly we all speak, or ought to speak—the tone in which we generally converse, and in which we should read. This is sometimes called ‘level speaking.’ We are all endowed (there are some exceptions) with this range of voice; but its formation for public use lies in our own hands. When we have the good fortune to hear some splendid vocalist; we are apt to think it is simply a gift. Certainly there may be the endowment of a voice capable of great effect, but the singer has not only to learn to play on his instrument; he has, in a sense, to ‘make his voice,’ and the smoothness, softness, or power to which you listen with delight, is the result of years of study and practice to develop, strengthen, and extend the voice, to obtain perfect command over the breath, and to render the voice, in tone and flexibility, part of himself, and subservient to his will. No vocalist or instrumentalist would dream of coming before the public without practice, let his gifts be what they may. But how very few are the public speakers who ever think of the necessity of practising in private, and of studying alone.

ON THE NECESSITY OF BEING HEARD.

The first thing every public speaker should determine is to be heard by all those to whom he speaks—to fill with his voice the building. In order to do this, much depends on the pitch and management of the voice. We are all able to reach more hearers by that pitch of voice which we use in conversation than by any other. Whenever a speaker starts on too high a pitch, he strains his voice and speaks with pain, and everyone who speaks with pain to himself is heard with pain

by others. The voice should therefore be pitched in the ordinary speaking key—our middle voice, our natural voice, our conversational voice—and all straining of it by an extraordinary effort is to be avoided. As long as we keep within bounds, the voice will always be under control, and however large the building in which we have to speak, we shall have a reserve of voice left. No public speaker should fall into the habit of speaking in a loud and vociferous way. It is not the loud but the distinct voice that carries. When a speaker is loud and noisy, his words fall on the nerves of his hearers, and his efforts are apt to impress them—as a big drum does—having little but sound in them.

Nothing secures the attention of an audience like a gentle beginning. This is as old as oratory itself. Some speakers, indeed, begin to speak *pianissimo*, but all should begin *piano*. It has the effect of arresting all noises like coughing or restlessness, and makes an audience feel that they are going to listen to something worth hearing. The entire principles of the management of the voice are contained in those old lines :

‘Begin low,
Speak slow,
Take fire,
Rise higher :
When most impressed,
Be self-possessed.’

The writer has found it a useful rule, in order to be well heard, to fix not only the eye but the mind on some one person who is far distant from the voice, and to consider that you are speaking to that one person alone, and must make him hear. If you find that you gain and keep the attention of that one listener, you may be almost sure that all who are nearer to your voice will hear you well.

ON SUSTAINING THE VOICE

There is nothing more fatal to being heard than dropping the voice; and few faults are more common among English readers and speakers. To be heard, the voice must be sustained. I do not mean a monotonous utterance, devoid of all emotion and feeling, but a natural, warm, conversational tone, sustained throughout the passage read or spoken, free from that common trick of many speakers, who begin the sentence aright, but drop its closing words at their own feet, instead of making us all hear the last word as distinctly as we hear the first. The well-sustained voice, never dropped at a comma or semicolon, and only lowered one tone at the close of a sentence, is one of the great secrets of being well heard. Milton's stately verse is a fine school for practice; and his opening lines in 'Paradise Lost' give a good example of reading in the sustained voice'

I have ventured to mark the passage with the rising (´) and falling (`) inflection of the voice :

'Of man's first disobedience', and the fruit'
Of that forbidden tree', whose mortal taste'
Brought death into the world' and all our woe',
With loss of Eden', till one greater Man'
Restore us', and regain the blissful seat',
Sing', Heavenly Muse', that on the sacred top'
Of Oreb', or of Sinai', didst inspire'
That Shepherd', who first taught the chosen seed'
In the beginning' how the heavens and earth'
Rose out of chaos ` . Or' . if Sion hill'
Delight thee more', and Siloa's brook that flow'd'
Fast by the oracle of God', I thence'
Invoke thy aid' to my* adventurous song'.
That' with no middle flight' intends to soar'
Above th' Aonian mount', whilst it pursues
Things' unattempted yet' in prose or rhyme ` ` .

* 'My,' in poetry, is to be almost always read short, as if it werẽ 'mẽ.'

Here is a passage of sixteen lines, which everyone who attempts to read aloud will see requires the sustained voice. The only fall of voice is on 'chaos' and 'rhyme.' And yet we should be able to hear those two words as distinctly as the rest.

In speaking in this chapter of the practical use of the voice, its training and discipline, I have dwelt on three points :

The necessity of being heard;

The necessity of sustaining the voice;

The necessity of daily practice.

Let it not be said that speech is one of God's gifts to man. The gifts of God to man are many, but they never supersede the necessity of culture. God bestows faculties which are to be developed by laborious training. The right use of all our powers depends upon cultivation, and they are deteriorated and lost through neglect.

The gist of my advice, from a long trained experience, to every student who would improve his voice for speaking and reading, is contained in two words—*daily practice*.

CHAPTER III.

ARTICULATION AND PRONUNCIATION

‘Speak the speech, I pray you, trippingly on the tongue.’

SHAKSPERE.

THE voice of the living speaker makes an impression on the mind much stronger than that made by the perusal of any writing. The tones of the voice, the looks, the gestures which accompany it, convey infinitely more than anything written. Hence, our sympathy is awakened more by hearing a speaker than by reading his works. True, the printed book can go where the living voice cannot; but the triumphs of eloquence must be the outcome of spoken, not of written language. If the voice may be justly regarded as the instrument of spoken language, *articulation* and *pronunciation* may be said to be the music which we discourse from it. The English nation have such a habit of hurrying their words that their rapidity in speaking is the main cause of the indistinctness which prevails both in familiar conversation and in public speaking. This evil commences in the nursery, is continued into the schoolroom, and too often goes with us into life; and it is painful to hear us, Englishmen and Englishwomen, not speak, but clip and mutilate our words, and run them into one another without the least regard to our consonants. I have found, from long experience, that most cases of stammering arise from children

being allowed, in the first instance, to gabble instead of speak their words, and no case of stammering can be cured except by bringing back the pupil to slow, distinct, deliberate speaking. Parents, who stand at the gate of life, are the persons to 'reform this altogether,' instead of leaving young children to acquire vicious modes of speaking from servants and others who are in no way qualified to teach their own tongue. Does any true teacher of music set his young pupil to scramble through a difficult sonata ? Does he not begin with slowly-practised scales, which are the foundation of all the rapid notes that can afterwards be played by the most lissom fingers ? *Words* slowly articulated and distinctly pronounced are to language what scales are to music. Yet what is more common than to hear even public speakers clipping such words as 'praising,' 'beseeching', 'singing', into 'praisin', 'beseechin', 'singin' ? Shakspeare must really have known and watched the rapidity which is so predominant a feature in English delivery, for he makes Hamlet say to the player, 'Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced it to you, trippingly on the tongue'; that is, with distinct articulation.

ARTICULATION.

By this I mean the words which are spoken by the mouth and its several organs—the palate, the tongue, the teeth, and the lips. Every word we utter should have the ring of a new coin from the mint—distinct, clear-cut, and finished. Rapidity of speech prevents articulation, and misses the meaning of what we utter. It is far better for the student to read too slowly than too fast; and for this purpose it is well to mark a book with many more points or pauses than are necessary. The following sentence may be pointed in this way, as an example :

‘A system—of this kind—arising—from the arrangement—of a multitude—of minute particulars—which

often elude—the most careful search—and sometimes—escape our observation—must always—stand in need—of improvement.*

Any passage, prose or poetry, can be marked in this way; as, for example, the following lines in Pope's 'Essay on Man,' where the poet is inquiring after happiness :

'Plant | of celestial seed, | if dropp'd below, |
Say | in what mortal | soil | thou deign'st to grow ? |
Twined | with the wreaths | Parnassian | laurels yield |
Or reap'd | in iron | harvests of the field ? |
Fix'd | to no spot | is happiness | sincere, |
'Tis | nowhere | to be found, | or | everywhere.'

And I am much mistaken if it will not be found the best mode for acquiring distinct and deliberate articulation. It may be affirmed with certainty that those who wish to read well must make use of twice the number of pauses they find on the printed page, and pause double the time that is generally assigned to them.

THE TONGUE, TEETH, AND LIPS.

There are three main factors in all distinct articulation : the tongue, the teeth, and the lips. All three must be constantly and carefully employed by every distinct speaker, and it will much help us if we recollect this. The tongue has a considerable share in the work. It forms all words beginning with the following letters : *c, d, g, h, j, k, l, n, q, r, s, t, w, x, z*. If the student† will slowly and carefully pronounce these letters, he

* Lowth's preface to his 'Grammar.'

†I employ the word 'student' without any reference to the age of those who, wishing to improve themselves in reading, are willing to subject themselves to the vocal exercises and practice which I suggest, especially the younger clergy.

will find that the tongue utters them all behind the teeth, and (except in the case of *w*) without the intervention of the lips. The vowels *a, e, i, o, u*, are floated off the tongue almost without any perceptible effort or motion. The lips form all words beginning with *b, f, m, p, v, w*; while the teeth may be said to be constantly engaged, in conjunction with the tongue and lips, in giving to all the consonants their place, value, and finish.

CONSONANTS.

Our consonants are the key of all cultured and distinct articulation. 'Take care of your consonants, and the vowels will take care of themselves.' The final consonant locks the word, which, indeed, is never finished if the final consonant be not heard. If a student should ask, 'Why make so much of the consonant in reading?' I answer, 'Pay homage to your consonants; never slur or miss one.'

Let us take a short exercise in the final consonants *st* :

'Thou confessed'*st*, diffused'*st*, designed'*st*, enforced'*st*, prepared, *st*, resolved'*st*, restrained'*st*. The student can write out for himself an exercise of this kind extending to any length, but each word reminding him that the final *st* must be locked by tongue and teeth with the utmost care. And if it should seem to any of my readers that this advice is pedantic and unnecessary, turn to the twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and read there, at the fifth verse, how the great Apostle Paul, pleading before King Agrippa, with all the *verve* of an orator, exclaims, 'After the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.'*

* It may be said, 'Paul did not speak in English, but in his own tongue.' In writing, however, on English language, it is necessary to adhere to our English rendering.

I will take only one other consonant, but one of paramount importance, the final consonant *d*. There is no one of the consonants more slurred and neglected. Take, for example, the little conjunction ‘and.’ Not one reader in twenty—no, not one in fifty—utters the final *d*. ‘And at, and in, and out, and on, and up,’ are constantly read, ‘an’ at, an’ in, an’ out, an’ on, an’ up.’

I enter a church and hear a clergyman reading our incomparable Liturgy, which as Archbishop Whately said, ‘is so framed as to be a continual check upon the speaker, a corrector of his errors—in short, a standing monitor to the minister and his congregation’; and I can tell in two minutes whether he has cultivated himself in speaking, by the little word ‘and.’ If a reader is ready to shut up this paper, saying ‘Absurd to dwell on such a trifle!’ I reply, ‘In good reading and speaking there is no such thing as a trifle. Perfection is made up of trifles, and perfection is not trifle.’ Tom Hood, in his moral on gold, gives us all a splendid exercise on the consonant *d* :

‘Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold;
Molten, graven, hammer’d and roll’d,
Heavy to get, and light to hold:
Hoarded, barter’d, bought and sold,
Stolen, borrow’d, squander’d, doled,
Spurn’d by the young, hugg’d by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould.’

RAPIDITY OF SPEECH.

Though I have previously urged the practice of slow, deliberate speech, yet I strongly recommend, to those who have mastered this, extreme rapidity of speech, as a means of acquiring complete command over the voice and mastery of

the breath. This is simply a matter of progress, as it is with the musician, who begins with the patient practice of slow scales, and ends with *prestissimo*. So in all things : we proceed from what we can do to-day to what we cannot yet do to-morrow. I recommended the utmost precipitancy of utterance you can reach, taking care never to outrun the complete articulation of every word. A daily practice of this kind will be found, by the advanced student, of great value. It strengthens the voice, gives complete control over the breath, and quickens the action of tongue, teeth and lips in their grip and finish of words. After some month's short daily practice in rapidity, Robert Southey's 'Cataract of Lodore' may be read aloud, from beginning to end, in less than two minutes.*

PRONUNCIATION.

The difference between articulation and pronunciation is so marked as to afford no hesitancy in discriminating between them. The former is trained utterance, the latter is propriety of delivery. The public speaker should give to every word he utters that pronunciation which the best usage has taught, in contradistinction to broad, vulgar provincialisms; so that sense, sound, and spelling may all be faithfully rendered. We should listen to the best models in speaking, and so speak that, if possible, no one should know whether we are English, Irish, Scotch, or Welsh. Brogue, accent, peculiarity of any kind, should be got rid of. Defective pronunciation is generally contracted when we are young. Parents are to blame who allow their children to learn to speak under those who know not

* The author recommends students to use a cork in practice, cut to three-quarters of an inch in height, between the front teeth, removing it when the jaws get tired. He will be happy to explain the mode of practice to any correspondent.

how to speak themselves. These defects, if we have had the misfortune to contract them, must be got rid of by every student who enters a calling in which he needs public speaking. What these defects are could only be pointed out by the living teacher. Indeed, it is almost impossible to teach the art of reading and speaking by the printed page. Every fault should be corrected, and every beauty in speaking should be illustrated by the living voice. But some of these bad faults in pronunciation are :

- (a) Dropping the letter *h*, as in *home*, or aspirating it where it is silent (as in the word *hour*).
- (b) Miscalling our gracious Queen 'Victoria' as 'Victorier,' and the word 'idea' as 'ideer.'
- (c) Mispronouncing the beautiful word 'forgive' as if it were 'furgive,' 'for' as if 'fur,' 'from' as if 'frum.'
- (d) 'Violet' and 'violent' as if 'violet' and 'vielent.'

Faults like these might be made to fill a page. 'A word to the wise is enough.' All I can do is to lay down rules and state principles; the student must apply them. But the speaker cannot pay too strict attention to culture. A slip of the tongue is worse than a slip of the pen.

In this chapter I have dwelt on *articulation* and *pronunciation*. They form the very essence of cultured reading. They are the true economy in all speaking; for he who articulates with precision, and pronounces with accuracy, need never over-exert his voice. He is heard all through a building. His words fall like a razor on the ear for clearness, and like music for softness. He is enabled to dispense with mere loudness of voice. He speaks all his words with loyal care and finished utterance. You are always sorry when he has ceased to speak. He fulfils the three requisites of good speaking :

1. Have something to say.
2. Know how to say it.
3. Sit down when you have said it.

I conclude by pointing back to one of the finest instances of good reading of which we have ever heard. It took place more than two thousand years ago. The Israelites had lately returned from seventy years of Babylonish captivity. 'Ezra the scribe stood upon pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and Ezra brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding; and he read therein before the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning till mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. So they read in the book in the law of God *distinctly*... and gave the sense ... and caused them to understand the reading' (Neh. viii. 2, 3, 4, 8).

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BREATH.

‘Reading aloud is of the first importance in giving strength to the organs of respiration.’—COMBE, *Elements of Physiology*.

NATURE and art must combine to form a reader and speaker. The acquirement of this rare gift depends, firstly, on an intelligent understanding of the written language; secondly, on the control and inflections of the voice, to suit the characters introduced in the narrative; thirdly, on a complete mastery of articulation and pronunciation, as indicated in the last chapter.

In addition to the above, the following requisites of good reading may be mentioned, which are rarely the gift of Nature, but may be ours as the fruit of self-education in the art : Lively sympathy with your author, quick conception of character, good powers of imitation, a vivid imagination, a correct judgment, a refined taste trained rapidity of sight, by which the eye outstrips the voice, and always embraces more words than the tongue can utter, and a complete command over the breath. Let the reader but feel what he utters, and the correct delivery will follow. The nearer the mind of the reader can approach to the genius of the author, the more correct will be the interpretation. The scarcity of good readers and speakers cannot be wondered at when we reflect how the cultivation of these gifts is neglected in English education.

At schools in this country everything is taught *but* the mother-tongue and its correct pronunciation. A man is thus left, should circumstances throw him into a profession requiring the use of the voice, to do the best he can in after-life with all the faults and imperfections with which he finds himself weighted.

I am rejoiced to see that the Head-master of Harrow, one of our greatest public schools, has had the courage and wisdom to speak out at a late conference of head-masters. It is passing strange that in this country, where, more than in any other, public speaking is an indispensable requisite, there is literally no school for its acquisition. Neither at Oxford nor Cambridge is speaking made a part of education. Men intending to enter the Church or the Bar are never made to understand that there is a right and wrong way of speaking. Many, indeed, imagine that such a study is beneath them. They think that a man is born an orator, and the power of good and elegant reading and correct speaking is within any man's reach at his option. In answer to this, we need only point to the Lords and Commons for specimens of Parliamentary orators, and to our churches for clerical reading and preaching.

The words of Mr. Welldon, Head-master of Harrow, and the resolution which he carried, will, I hope, have weight in the country, and I trust will have considerable influence with the heads of our preparatory schools; for, as all good speaking should begin with children in the nursery and the home, so the elements of good reading should begin in our preparatory schools. It is no more possible for public schools to turn out good classics if the boys are not well prepared, than to make good readers and speakers at their speech-days if boys are not taught the elements of reading before they enter a public school. Some of us who attend these speech-days are apt to blame the particular school for defects. I blame the system of English

education. We are old enough in education to know that you can do little without a good foundation. I remember a distinguished head-master* saying to me many years ago, 'If I were asked where I would place the best master in a school, I would say with the juniors, for that is the foundation of all good scholarship.'

I follow my words on the *voice* and on *articulation and pronunciation* by speaking on

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE BREATH.

This will deserve the serious study of my readers. It may seem strange that the natural process of breathing should require any regulation or practice. Experience, however, has proved that there is a proper way of using the breath during the act of speaking, and that violations of this right action are attended by ill effects. The lungs occupy the upper part of the body. It is clear that an organ of such magnitude and importance in our animal economy should be under proper control and good management.

It must be patent to all that health itself will be materially affected by the right or wrong use of so important a function of the body. Scientists tell us that a judicious exercise of the lungs in speaking and singing strengthens the chest. Cuvier said that he would have fallen a victim to consumption if he had not had the good fortune to be appointed to a professorship in which he found the constant delivery of lectures to his students a most beneficial exercise for his lungs. Our doctors often say : 'Let your girls learn singing; it will expand the chest and strengthen the lungs.'

* Dr. Rigaud.

The German nation are seldom affected with lung disease. This is commonly attributed to the strength which their lungs acquire by frequent exercise in vocal music, which among them forms an essential part of national education. I am glad that of late years the Education Department is more and more encouraging and recognising music in our elementary schools. I wish they may see their way to do so still further, so that boys and girls with genius for music may be fetched up from below. Some of our most distinguished and honoured musicians in the land began as choir-boys in our great cathedrals.

It is well to dispose of a popular fallacy, that the speaker or singer should be always provided with a supply of breath to meet all emergencies. There is no means of providing such a supply, nor is it needful. Respiration at frequent intervals is a condition of life itself, necessary to everyone who lives. When the voice is at rest, respiration is made regularly. The lungs are filled and emptied at about equal intervals of time. But during speaking this is not so. Inspiration and expiration must then be regulated, both in extent and frequency, by the length and construction of the phrases that have to be spoken. When we are speaking, inspiration should be made as quickly as possible, and expiration as slowly as possible.

HOW TO BREATHE

By depressing the diaphragm just below the waist. It takes time to learn, and also to recollect to do this.* Then breathing should be carried on as slowly and smoothly as possible. The breath should be taken as much as is possible through the nostrils, not through the mouth. It is of great importance to teach children to keep the mouth shut, and to acquire the habit

* By placing the hand just below the waist the student will at once understand this.

of breathing through the nostrils, and to go to sleep with the mouth shut. By keeping the mouth closed there is always sufficient saliva to check a tendency to cough. Practice will render all this easy, and it will soon become a habit.

Here let me indicate to every speaker (and singer) that

THE LIPS ARE NATURE'S RESPIRATOR.

If all who have to speak under the conditions of heated buildings will hermetically seal their lips for two minutes on first coming out to meet the cold air of night (or fog), refusing to speak to anyone, and inhale or exhale the air through the nostrils, the lungs will gradually become acclimatized to the outer atmosphere, and the cold air will not strike on the throat, which after the effort of speaking (or singing)* is rendered more susceptible to outer influences. This simple recipe of Nature is worth a great deal to all who have to use the voice in public†.

WHEN TO BREATHE.

Just as often as Nature requires, taking care never to exhaust the lungs. Signor Crivelli, in his work on the art of singing, gives the following rules for the management of the breath, which, though intended for singers, are equally applicable to readers and speakers : 'The clear and elastic vibration of sounds depends on the art of breathing gently, never forcing the breath in the production of the voice, but always sparing it in such a manner that the fibres and muscles of the throat may not be irritated. Thus, knowing how to spare

* By breathing through the nostrils, the air is filtered before it reaches the lungs, and as it has further to travel when inhaled through the nostrils, than through the mouth, it is also a degree less cold when it reaches the lungs.

† Avoid covering the throat or mouth with mufflers, etc.

and make good use of the breath is of the greatest importance, as from this is derived the power of sustaining the sounds—of sending forth the voice in the most energetic or in the most delicate manner—so as to express with true colouring whatever emotion or passion the poet and composer may wish to describe.' Few of us are aware of the extent of the lungs, or the space they occupy in the body. Mr. Sims Reeves, the greatest English tenor of our time, informed the author that a doctor had once told him that he possessed the most capacious lungs he had ever seen in anyone. This may account for the marvellous *timbre* and power of his voice in his zenith. There can be no doubt that all the greatest singers have had unusually large lungs. I am quite aware of the difficulty of explaining in writing the intricacies of this subject; information can, of course, be more easily conveyed orally. Still, if I set students thinking they can, I trust, practically apply some of the hints themselves.

It is often asked, How is it that clergy suffer from their professional avocations, while lawyers, with more continuous use of the voice, are comparatively exempt? The usual inference has been that lawyers understand the principles of speaking better than the clergy. With all respect for both, and belonging to one of these bodies myself, I venture to say neither of them understand anything about it till they begin to teach themselves. Both undergo usually the same course of education, from school to college, and from thence into life. I am not aware that any preparation is required from the legal student beyond passing his law examinations. He appears upon his arena in much the same condition as his clerical compeer. There cannot, therefore, be any assumed superiority from presumed better training. The fact is, the locality is totally different. A court, as a rule, is well arranged, so that the judge, lawyers, and jury form a kind of family party, placed in such proximity that all concerned can hear under almost any circumstances. It is a lawyer's own fault if he is not heard in

court. He addresses ears anxiously awaiting every word that falls from his lips; he speaks to a hushed audience. The clergy, on the contrary, have large and often straggling buildings to fill; for our churches seem to be generally built on the very worst acoustic principles. They address audiences sometimes willing, oftener indifferent. The clergyman is frequently almost put down with coughing. He must win his way and make them hear. He raises his voice, hoping that all may hear, the very effort to be heard producing a habit of forcing his words, in large churches, which frequently ends in marring the voice altogether. It is a great mistake to imagine that one must use the highest pitch of voice in order to be heard in a large assembly. This is confounding two things which are different—loudness with the key or note in which we speak.

HOW TO ACQUIRE COMMAND OF THE BREATH.

I can only give the simple practical rule which I resolutely practised when a young clergyman, forming my voice; that is, to take an inspiration, and read aloud as many lines as you can without exhaustion; then take a second inspiration, and repeat the process; and so on till the student finds, after some time, that by this daily practice he acquires complete command over his breath. I give a short extract from Southey's 'Cataract of Lodore,' as an example for breath-practice. It may be read in four breaths.

How does the water come down at Lodore ?

First Breath. { Here it comes sparkling,
And there it lies darkling,
Here smoking and frothing,
Its tumult and wrath in,
It hastens along, conflicting and strong !
Now striking and raging,
As if a war raging
Its caverns and rocks among.

Second Breath.

Rising and leaping,
Sinking and creeping,
Swelling and flinging,
Showering and springing,
Eddying and whisking,
Spouting and frisking,
Twining and twisting,
Around and around;
Collecting, disjecting,
With endless rebound;
Smiting and fighting,
A sight to delight in,
Confounding, astounding,
Dizzing and deafening the ear with its sound.

Third Breath.

Reeding and speeding,
And shocking and rocking,
And darting and parting,
And threading and spreading,
And whizzing and hissing,
And dripping and skipping,
And whitening and brightening,
And quivering and shivering,
And hitting and splitting,
And shining and twining,
And rattling and battling,
And shaking and quaking,
And pouring and roaring.

Fourth Breath.

And waving and raving,
And tossing and crossing,
And flowing and growing,
And running and stunning,
And hurrying and skurrying,
And glittering and frittering,
And gathering and feathering,
And dinning and spinning,
And foaming and roaming,
And dropping and hopping,
And working and jerking,
And heaving and cleaving,
And thundering and floundering.

This is an excellent breath-practice. The student can collate for himself any number of exercises. Milton affords endless choice. Let him mark his passages to be read in so many breaths, and he will find, by practice, that he can read many lines in one breath. This practice will immensely increase the power of the breath, and the command over it.

Finally, the breath may be largely strengthened by the practice of the loud whisper. This is acquired by a forced *sotto voce* whisper, from the back of the throat, as loud as can be obtained. Thus, in Pope's inimitable hymn, 'The Dying Christian to his Soul,'

'Hark ! they whisper : Angels say,
Sister spirit, come away,'

here the words marked in italics should be uttered in a strong whisper, as if from heaven. This hymn was, I think, one of the finest recitations of the late W.C. Macready.*

* Macready also recited with great pathos Herber's hymn, 'Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee.'

I need scarcely remind the student that in 'Macbeth,' Act V., Scene I, where Lady Macbeth walks in her sleep and reveals the terrible crime of the murder of Duncan, every word she utters must be delivered in the strong whisper. And her closing words of soul-agony must have the strongest emotional *sotto voce* whisper :

'Lady M. To bed, to bed; there's knocking at the gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand : what's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed, to bed !'

Macready told me that in this scene Mrs. Siddons, the queen of tragedy, could fill the largest building from floor to ceiling with her *whisper*.

CHAPTER V.

ON EMPHASIS.

‘The right word in the right place, and the right emphasis on the right word.’

DR. RUSH.

IN previous chapters I have attempted to lay down (a) The importance of good reading and speaking; (b) The nature of the voice; (c) Articulation and pronunciation; (d) The management of the breath.

I have endeavoured to make the subject interesting to my readers, but I have mainly written for students who have set themselves in earnest to the task of acquiring the art of reading. Excellence can be reached at no ordinary cost, and only by painstaking labour. Practice alone will make the finished speaker, who need never unduly raise or exert the voice, as all his words will be spoken off the teeth and lips, with a care over his consonants, which makes it a pleasure to listen. And nothing but practice will give the student that complete control over his breath by which he can acquire smoothness in speaking, and do comparatively what he pleases with his voice.

In this chapter I approach the vital subject of emphasis, which is at once, perhaps, the most difficult and one of the most important things in all reading and speaking.

WHAT IS EMPHASIS :

In every group of words, which are the pictures of ideas, we shall find some which are of more importance than others. The art of good speaking lies in giving to each word, not only its distinct articulation and right pronunciation, but its proper weight and due importance. The power of giving peculiar effect to certain words in a speech or sentence must be the double work of mind and voice. The speaker should first settle in his mind what those words are, and then should produce them by a flexibility of voice which he has acquired by previous practice and discipline. This faculty constitutes one of the greatest charms in speaking, for it is the most successful of all ways by which the attention of an audience is riveted by the speaker, and from which they may carry away a lasting recollection of what was spoken. It is not too much to say that we have all listened to words emphasized with marked beauty and force, as they fell from the lips of the speaker, which will be retained in vivid remembrance during the rest of our lives.

Take as an illustration of this Leigh Hunt's 'Abou Ben Adhem,' a little poem of exquisite grace and pathos :

'Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase !)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace;
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily-bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold;
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou ?" The Vision raised its head,
And, with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one ?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow-men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again, with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo ! Ben Adhem's name LED all the rest.'

I shall never forget hearing Macready recite this little poem at the Bristol Athenæum more than thirty years ago, or the thrilling power with which, as he threw the right hand in a majestic gesture towards heaven, he uttered the words :

' . . . LED all the rest.'

This is an illustration of how the speaker had first made up his mind upon the idea, and then threw his voice upon the single word, so that the mind of the listener saw the picture which he gave us, and would never forget it; saw the room, saw the Angel, and finally saw Ben Adhem as he

' . . . LED all the rest.'

Now, if a speaker should possess, as Macready did, the faculty of arming a large proportion of his words with this sort of electric power, the passages he utters will be indelibly impressed on the memory of his hearers, while their will and judgment are led captive by the force of his language. I have read that the celebrated Lord Chatham, whose speaking was embellished with all the graces which could flow from the highest culture, features of finished mould, action of natural grace, a voice of perfect intonations, and an eye like the lightning-flash itself—nevertheless owed a large share of the magic of his mighty eloquence to the music of his words.

On the right management of emphasis, then, depends the very spirit and life of good speaking. If no due emphasis is placed on any words, not only is our speaking heavy and lifeless, but there is no intelligent meaning thrown into what we speak or read. Let us take a simple question, 'Do you ride to town today ?' These six words are capable of no fewer than

four different meanings, according to the emphasis placed on the words. If pronounced thus, 'Do *you* ride to town to-day ?' the answer may be, 'No; I intend to send a messenger in my stead.' If thus, 'Do you *ride* to town to-day ?' the answer may be : 'No; I intend to walk.' 'Do you ride to *town* to-day ?' 'No; I intend to ride into the country.' 'Do you ride to town *to-day* ?' 'No; but I shall do so to-morrow.' Thus, the whole force of an expression may depend on a word, and we may give our hearers quite different views of the same sentence by placing the emphasis differently. In the following words of our Saviour, observe in what different lights the thought is placed according as the words are pronounced.

'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss ?' '*Betrayest* thou' marks the infamy of his treachery. '*Betrayest thou*' makes the reproach turn upon his close personal relation to his Master. '*Betrayest thou the Son of man*' rests it upon our Lord's spotless character. '*Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss* ?' turns it upon his dastardly use of a sign of peace and friendship for the purpose of destroying Christ. Take an instance from the Old Testament : 'And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he *spared* to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come unto him' (2 Sam. xii. 4). An ordinary reader of this passage will, without trouble, mark the obviously emphatic words, viz., 'traveller,' 'rich,' 'spared,' 'own' (twice), 'poor,' and 'lamb,' but all, except a thoughtful and skilled reader, will overlook '*it*,' which, though the smallest, is perhaps the most important word in the whole of this dramatic verse. Thus : 'And there came a *traveller* unto the *rich* man, and he *spared* to take of his *own* flock and of his *own* herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the

poor man's lamb, and dressed *it* for the man that was come unto him.'

Take a passage from the New Testament : 'And they asked them saying, Is this your son, who ye say was born blind ? How then doth he now see ? His parents answered them, and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not : he is of age, ask him' (St. John ix. 19-21).

Assuming that all my readers know what is the rising and falling rule of inflection, I will reproduce these verses with such marks as I can supply :

'And they asked *them*. . . saying, . . . Is *this* your son, . . . who ye say was born *blind* ? . . . How, then, doth he how *sèe* ? His parents answered them, and said, . . . We know that this is our *són*, *ánd*, that he was born *blínd*; . . . but, by what means he now *séeth*, . . . we know *nòt*; . . . *ór* who hath opened his *éyes* . . . we know *nòt* : . . . he is of *áge*, . . . ask *him*.'

Take another passage, where, in our Lord's incomparable parable, the elder son murmurs against his father :

'And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment : and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends : But as soon as this thy son was come . . . thou hast killed for him the fatted calf' (St. Luke xv. 29-30).

Not one clergyman in a thousand puts the emphasis on the little word 'kid.' Yet the whole gist of the elder son's reproach, which he flung in his father's face, is : 'I serve thee these *many* years, yet thou never gavest me [so much as] a *kid*; but as soon as *this* . . . *thy son* . . . is come, thou hast

killed for *him* . . . the *fatted calf*.' 'Nothing too small for me, nothing too great for him.'

These examples might be indefinitely multiplied; but they will suffice to show that there is as great a difference between a chapter of the Bible read by one who places the several emphases with thought and judgment, and by one who neglects or misplaces them, as there is between a sonata of Beethoven played and interpreted by a consummate artist, and the same attempted by a bungling beginner. Let me, at the same time, caution students against an error—that of multiplying emphatic words too much. It is only by a prudent reserve in the use of them that we can give them weight. If a speaker attempts to make everything he says of high importance by a multitude of strong emphases, we learn to pay no regard to them.

WRONG EMPHASIS.

How can I distinguish the words which ought to be emphatic? My answer is that everyone who can understand an author ought to be able at once to distinguish which are the important words and which are the unimportant. To the important words give the weight of your voice, and if you feel what you read there will be no difficulty in this. It is simply, therefore, a matter of study, thought, and care to distinguish the right emphasis and avoid the wrong.

I recommend all who have to read anything in public to read it over carefully beforehand. Think out how you would speak those words if they were the sentiments of your own mind. By this course you can hardly fail of finding the important words on which to lay the emphasis. It is well, if you have a second book, to mark in pencil those words. An infallible rule is not to accent or emphasize the unimportant words, especially

all prepositions, such as 'on,' 'upon,' 'in,' and so forth, unless it is an exception—as when you would say, 'I will walk *over* the bridge, not *under* it.' This, of course, is correct, but to say :

Lord, have mercy *upon* us,
Christ, have mercy *upon* us,
Lord, have mercy *upon* us,

is atrocious reading.

I was once invited to hear a lady recite Tennyson's 'May Queen'. She did exactly as follows :

'And that good man, the clergyman, has told me words of peace.

O, blessings *on* his kindly voice, and *on* his silver hair,

And blessings *on* his whole life long until he meet me there !

O, blessings *on* his kindly heart, and *on* his silver head !

A thousand times I blest him as he knelt beside my bed.'

This good lady had never learned the very first elements of reading or speaking, when she could lay all her emphasis on the preposition, and omit to place it on such lovely soft words as 'blessings,' 'kindly voice,' 'silver hair,' 'kindly heart,' 'silver head.'

Nor can I fail to point out the almost countless mistakes which we clergy make in reading the Church Service. I have heard clergy, over and over again, both in our cathedrals and parish churches, in the General Confession, instead of saying, 'And there is no *health* in us,' assert, 'And *there* is no health in *us*.'

The Church Service is performed by us clergy in so slovenly a manner that not only the beauty and spirit of the

service is lost, but the very meaning is obscured, concealed, and perverted. How can this be otherwise, when there is no teaching in our public schools, no teaching in our Universities, no teaching in our theological colleges, no competent episcopal test when young men come to be ordained ? We often complain that the laity take so little heart-interest in our services. We blame them. It would be much nearer the truth to blame ourselves. It is our own fault that there is no composition in the English tongue which is so little understood, so little appreciated, so listlessly heard by the laity, as our incomparable Church Service.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE PAUSE.

‘The foundation of reading and speaking is good sense and solid thought.’

SHERIDAN.

FIRST, to understand your author; secondly, to feel what he says; thirdly, to interpret him by the mind and voice, is to follow Nature. Never will a man speak well but when he understands, feels, and is in earnest. Someone has said : ‘Words are the paints : the voice the brush : the mind the painter.’ No doubt there is as much difference between a good and bad reader as between a good and bad artist. It is the language of the heart that carries conviction. It is this which makes a speaker persuasive. We must not counterfeit warmth without feeling it. No disguise can be so clever as not to be discovered. I trust nothing I write will lead any student to think that I advise a reader or speaker to simulate feelings and emotions which are not his own. Let our words always be, *‘Veræ voces ab imo pectore.’* Correct reading is a facsimile of correct speaking, and both are exact copies of real life. Read just as you would naturally speak on the same subject, and let your reading be so like speaking, that, if anyone should hear you without seeing you, he could not tell whether you were reading or speaking. This applies forcibly to the reading of written sermons, which is so usual in our pulpits. The reader should, in his delivery,

study to combine the advantages of a written composition with extemporaneous speaking. This will impart to a written sermon the freshness of oral speaking. Many preachers entirely mar a good sermon by slavishly and monotonously reading instead of speaking it.

I feel that it is impossible to give rules for reading every sentence, or, indeed, any sentence. Much more must be left to the student than can be written. All that is here attempted is a mere outline of the subject; enough, I hope, for everyone who is determined to succeed, and has the necessary industry and interest in our subject, and too much for such as are of an opposite mind. The road and journey are pointed out, but each student must do the travelling.

In this chapter I propose to treat upon one of the most important factors in reading and speaking :

THE PAUSE.

There are two kinds of pause—grammatical and rhetorical. The grammatical is distinguished by marks addressed to the eye, and is made *for* us. The rhetorical is distinguished by no mark, is addressed to the ear, and is made *by* us. All pauses were introduced with the art of printing, and it is questionable how far they aid us in learning to read or speak; for if there were no pauses we should be compelled to exercise the mind in order to understand the author. The art of punctuation is therefore a modern invention, not known previous to the art of printing; at least, we are sure that the ancients did not make use of any stops in their writing. They either recited without a book (which, though more difficult, is far preferable), or they applied themselves closely to the study of what they had to read, so as to know how to deliver it properly.

From our earliest childhood we have been taught to read by means of punctuation, but I believe that the better way would be to teach children to read without any points or marks, according to the practice of the ancients, and to continue this till they become expert in it. This would keep the mind perpetually awake to the meaning of what they read; whereas in the ordinary way of being taught by the aid of stops, they think they have done all that is necessary when they have uttered the words, and observed the stops in the manner indicated on the printed page.

The plan I would recommend to students is to copy out from authors such passages as they desire to read aloud, without marking any stops at all. In this way the mind alone must guide them in the right use of pauses; nor will they have anything to mislead them. This, I know by experience, is very laborious, but it will amply repay the labour. When they have had considerable practice in this manner, so as to be able to mark the sense of the passage with ease, let them return to the printed book, and they will find that they are giving their whole attention to the meaning, and that the printed stops are quite subsidiary; in fact, that they are as utterly regardless of them as if they were not there.

Let a young clergyman try this plan. Let him write out each week one of the Sunday lessons (the first or second), without any punctuation. Then study his own manuscript, and read it aloud, throwing into it, with mind and voice, all the shades of thought and meaning, as if he were reading his own sentiments. Afterwards let him return to the chapter in the printed Bible. Let him read that chapter in church on the following Sunday to his congregation, and I venture to predict that he will hardly know his own reading, or, rather, his *interpretation* of that chapter; and I shall be surprised if he

does not thank me for this suggestion. *Experto crede*. This will also much improve his sight-reading.

To become a good reader at sight, the eyes must always precede the voice by a number of words, so that the mind shall have time to take in the ideas. In walking, it is always well to see where we are about to step; so in reading, when the voice walks. Always 'look before you leap' is the rule for pedestrians. Always 'look before you utter' is the rule for readers.

Pauses in reading are analogous to rests in music.

GRAMMATICAL PAUSES.

Of these the shortest pause is the comma (,), which indicates a silence of about half a second, thus : 'Every leaf, every twig, every drop of water, teems with life.' Again, 'The colours of the rainbow are : violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.'

The second pause is a semicolon (;), which indicates a silence while we can say 'one'; and while we thus rest from physical effort, we can carry on the mental effort. In the following lines of Thomas Campbell, I have placed no punctuation. Let the reader point it for himself :

'There came to the beach a poor exile of Erin
The dew on his thin robe was heavy and chill
For his country he sighed when at twilight repairing
To wander alone by the wind-beaten hill
But the day-star attracted his eye's sad devotion
For it rose o'er his own native isle of the ocean
Where once in the fire of his youthful emotion
He sang the bold anthem of Erin-go-Bragh.'*

* From Campbell's 'Exile of Erin.'

The third pause is a colon (:), and indicates a silence while you count 'one, two,' thus : 'read the Holy Scriptures : they are the dictates of divine wisdom.' Again, 'Harbour not malice in thy heart : it will be a viper in thy bosom.' Again, 'Religion says, love all : hate none.'

The fourth pause is a period (.), which indicates a silence while we count 'one, two, three,' deliberately, and completes the sense. At the comma, semicolon, and colon, the voice should, as a rule, be sustained, but at the period, or full stop, the voice should, as a rule, fall half a tone, unless it be the close of an entire passage, when it should fall a whole tone, so as to convey to your hearers that the speech, chapter or poem which you are reading is ended.

THE RHETORICAL PAUSE.

This rests entirely with the reader : it is dictated by taste and feeling, and must be left to his own judgment. Its length also rests with the reader, and must be determined by the subject. The rhetorical pause occurs either before or after the important word, thus : 'To err—is human : to forgive—divine.' Again, 'And now—abideth, faith, hope, charity—these three: but the greatest of these—is—charity.' This pause is far more important than the grammatical, for it makes the melody of all good reading, while the grammatical marks the sense. At so low an ebb is the art of reading amongst us, that we have hardly advanced a step beyond comma, semicolon, colon, and period. The art of charming the ear and moving the soul is usually left to the student to acquire as he best can. Thus, through the want of understanding the value of the rhetorical pause, there is a passage in 'Macbeth,' which read without it, is downright nonsense—where, after Macbeth has committed the murder of Duncan, he says :

‘Will all great Neptune’s ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand ? No—these my hands will rather
The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
Making the green one red.’

The last line pronounced in that manner, calling the sea ‘the green one,’ makes nonsense of it. But if the reader throw his rhetorical pause in the proper place as thus—

‘Making the green—one red,’

there is conveyed the poetic idea that his murderous hands, dipped into the sea, would change the colour of the whole ocean into that of blood.

In reading prose, the student must determine his rhetorical pauses by his own mind; but in reading poetry the rhythm of the verse determines the musical pause for us. This has been called the *cæsural* pause. Thus, in Macaulay’s magnificent fragment, ‘The Armada,’ we have an example of this :

‘Attend, all ye who list to hear—our noble England’s praise :
I tell of the thrice-famous deeds—she wrought in ancient days,
When that great fleet invincible—against her bore in vain
The richest spoils of Mexico—the stoutest hearts of Spain.’

The whole poem must be read in the same way, dividing every line by the *cæsural* pause.

I am fully aware that all these rules may be uninteresting to the mere cursory reader, but I intend this work, from beginning to end, for students who desire to cultivate the art of reading and speaking. I shall be glad if I can be of use to them.

I am also aware that many persons resent being taught or told how to read; they regard all rules as slavish, and all teaching as tending to make us unreal, artificial and theatrical. ‘All you want,’ say they, ‘is sincerity in the speaker. Let him be natural and in earnest. Sincerity and earnestness will not

allow the speaker to wait on the arts of speech. The preacher who feels that the decision of a soul may hang upon the accents of his lips will not stop to adjust his inflections or mould his gestures.'

And yet that book which is our one text-book and theme, the Bible, requires for its proper delivery more study and a better understanding of its truths than any book in the world; and there can be no doubt that a deeper impression may be made on the mind by the reading of it in church than by the most luminous commentary. This is only another way of saying that the true reading of the Bible consists, firstly, in a knowledge of its truths by the mind and heart; and, secondly, in the method of presenting those truths to the hearer, which must be done by the voice.

We all covet the art, but few of us are willing to give the time and labour it requires; and these, I have noticed, are generally the persons to condemn others who have studied in order to excel. I am not, however, treating of elocution as a mere accomplishment, but as a real science, and the only one I have been able to discover by which Englishmen can intelligently speak their mother-tongue.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PAUSE (*continued*).

‘Probably every man is eloquent once in his life.’—

EMERSON.

NATURE teaches every man to be eloquent when he is in earnest, so that I am not advocating the artificial, but the natural. For true reading and speaking follow out the lines of Nature, and the more they are properly studied, the better shall we be able to distinguish between true speaking and the tricks of sophistry.

We must feel what we read, before we can make others feel it. This is the foundation of the rule, ‘*Si vis me flere, dolendum est tibi.*’

The standard of good speaking is to express one’s self, just as one would in earnest conversation with a friend. This we should all do if left to ourselves, and if early pains were not taken to substitute an artificial method for that which is natural. Hence the necessity of studying Nature, and avoiding all affectation, or the very approach of it. Be yourself. Beware of imagining that you must read in a different way and with a different tone from that of ordinary speaking. Yet good speaking is often neglected on the ground that it is the gift of Nature alone. This is a mistake. Like other acquirements, it is the reward of time and labour, prompted by true feeling, and

guided by correct thought. For, as Sheridan says, 'True eloquence is the art of placing truth in the most advantageous light for convincing and persuading men.'

This is not the work of a day, a month, a year, but a life. I have been a student of the art of speaking and reading for forty years, and I am still a learner every day I live. Success depends on the student's own exertions, uniting correct theory with faithful practice. Theory is one thing; practice, another. I proceed in this chapter to conclude the important subject of the pause.

THE INTERROGATION (?).

This indicates a pause equal to the colon or period, according to circumstances. The interrogation seems to me to be very imperfectly understood in reading. I am anxious to give the student simple but unfailing rules for dealing with it.

All questions may be divided into :

1. Questions direct.
2. Questions indirect.

The infallible rule is that the voice shall rise on all direct questions, and fall on all indirect questions. Thus : 'Can you *sée* ?' 'Can you *héar* ?' 'Can you *táste* ?' 'Can you *sméll* ?' 'Can you *féel* ?' These five questions are direct, because they admit of the answer 'Yes' or 'No.' All such questions require the voice to ask them with the rising or ascending inflection (').

But such questions as 'Who are *yòu* ?' 'What are you *dòing* ?' 'Where are you *gòing* ?' 'Of what are you thinking ?' 'Whom do you *lòve* ?' are all indirect, because they do not admit the answer 'Yes' or 'No.' You can test my theory thus : 'Can you *sée* ?' ('Yes' or 'No'). 'Who are *yòu* ?'

(‘Yes’ or ‘No’). The former makes sense; the latter is nonsense. ‘Can you héar ?’ (‘Yes’). ‘Can you táste ?’ (‘Yes’). ‘Can you féel ?’ (‘Yes’). ‘What are you dòing ?’ (‘Yes’). ‘Where are you gòing ?’ (‘Yes’). ‘Whom do you lòve ?’ (‘Yes’). The three first of these questions, if answered ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’ make sense; the three last, if answered ‘Yes’ or ‘No,’ make nonsense. The student has therefore only to analyze his question, and determine, by the answer, to which class it belongs, and treat it accordingly with his voice, giving it the upward (´) or downward (`) inflection.

I shall now give some interesting examples of questions, both direct and indirect. And the first series of them I shall select from the Holy Scriptures : ‘Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?’ Here the questioner expects the answer ‘No.’ The stress of the question lies in the last word, *Názareth*, and must have the rising inflection. But in the question, ‘By what authòrity doest thou these things ? and whò gave thee this authòrity ?’ the question must receive the downward inflection of the voice.

Where St. Paul asks a series of questions, and answers them (2 Cor. xi. 22, 23), they are all direct, and have all distinctly the rising inflection. ‘Are théy Hébrews ? So am I. Are théy Ísraelites ? So am I. Are théy the seed of Ábraham ? So am I. Are théy mínisters of Christ ? I am mòre.’

Again, there is a sublime passage of remonstrance and expostulation from God in the prophet Isaiah (chap. lviii. 5-8), which combines both the direct and indirect question, and should be delivered first with the upward and then with the downward inflection, thus : ‘Is it súch a fast that I have chòsen ? A day for a man to afflict his sóul ? Is it to bow down his head as a búlrush, and to spread sáckcloth and áshes únder him ? Wilt thou call thís a fást, and an acceptable dáy unto the Lórd ?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke ? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house ? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh ?' Take a similar instance of the direct and indirect question from the New Testament (Rom. ii. 3, 4) : 'And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them that do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God ? Or, despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance ?'

If we pass into the realm of poetry, we find manifold instances. Thus, Antony over the body of Cæsar says :

'He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill :
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious ?'

where the great poet makes him not so much ask a question, as draw a conclusion from premises that have been already admitted, and where the climax of the voice is on the word 'ambitious.' Or as even more strongly and bitterly marked in this :

'You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition ?'

These arguments, for so I call them, are to establish the following inference, the paraphrase of which would read thus:

'An ambitious man would not refuse a kingly crown :
But Cæsar thrice refused a kingly crown,—
Therefore cæsar was not an ambitious man.'

This is an instance of how much the student may do with his voice, and what argument the voice may be made to convey. Take another instance, from the 'Merchant of Venice,' where Shylock is speaking in sneering exultation over the misfortunes of Antonio :

'Moneys is your suit.

What should I say to you ? Should I not say,

Hath a *dóg móney* ? Is it possible

A *cur* can lend thrée thóusand dúcats ?'

Every word of these questions will bear a scathing intonation; but the term 'dog' and 'cur,' being emphatic allusions to what Antonio had said on the Rialto of Shylock's usury, are intended to carry tones of revengeful triumph into the heart of Antonio, and they may be run up, in each interrogation that is slowly delivered, into piercing scorn. Or, in the same play, take the vivid picture which Shakespeare draws of revenge—where Shylock, with set teeth, and flashing eye, and clenched fist, in tones of deepest anger and resentment, says :

'I am a *Jew*. Hath not a *Jew éyes* ? Hath not a *Jew hánds* ? *órgans* ? *diménsions* ? *sénses* ? *afféctions* ? *pássions* ? Is he not féd with the same fóod; húrt with the same wéapons; súbject to the same diséases; héal'd by the same méans; wárm'd and cóol'd by the same súmmer and wínter as a *Christian* ? If you stab us, do we not bléed ? If you tickle us, do we not láugh ? If you poison us, do we not díe ? And if you wrong us, shall we not revéngé ? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that. If a *Jew* wrong a *Christian*, what is his humility ? *Revenge*. If a *Christian* wrong a *Jew*, what should his sufferance be, by *Christian* example ? Why—REVENGE. The villainy *you* teach me, I will *execute* : and it shall go *hard*, but I will *better* the *instruction*.'

In the great play 'Coriolanus,' Shakespeare gives a magnificent example of this use of the interrogative, and of what the voice is capable of doing, to express a passion. In

Act V., Scene 5, Aufidius is taunting Coriolanus as a traitor who has abused his powers :

Cor. Traitor ? How now ?

Auf. Ay, traïtor, Marcius.

Cor. Héar'st thóu, Márs ?

Auf. Name not the god, thou bòy of tears.

Cor. Measureless liar, thou hast made my heart,
Too great for what contains it. BÓY ?'

I have heard that Macready threw such passion into the word 'boy' that his voice swept on that word from its lowest cadence to its highest note, and that in uttering it he seemed to touch the entire range of his voice. I say that I have heard this, for I never saw him act, though he was my intimate friend, and I have heard him scores of times read and recite.

I have dwelt at some length on the interrogative. The student will be repaid who spends time and pains on it.

THE EXCLAMATION (!).

This indicates about the same length of silence as the interrogative, but the voice generally (not, however, always) employs the falling inflection. Examples: when the fallen Cardinal Wolsey says :

'Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness !'

In 'Richard II.,' when the king, in his celebrated descant on the state of princes, says :

'I live with bread like you, feel want, taste grief,
Need friends—, subjeèted thus,
How can you say to me, I am a king !'

The plaintive exclamation of Macduff :

'O Banquo, Banquo,
Our royal master's murdered !'

The scornful exclamation of Shylock :

'Bass. This is Signior Antonio.

Shy. How like a fawning publican he looks !'

The bitter exclamation which Milton puts into the mouth of Satan :

'Farewell, happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells ! Hail ! Horrors ! Hail !
Infernal world ! And thou profoundest Hell !'

The mocking exclamation which the prophet Elijah flung at the prophets of Baal :

'And Elijah mocked the priests of Baal, and said, Cry aloud :* for he is a göd;† either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awâked' (1 Kings xviii. 27).

THE PARENTHESIS (. . .)

Dr. Lowth, an excellent grammarian, defines the parenthesis to be 'A member of a sentence inserted in the body of a sentence, which is neither necessary to the sense nor at all affects the construction.' If the nature of the parenthesis be once thoroughly understood, the student will be at no loss as to the true manner of delivering it. The only way to read it is to make a pause, then pronounce the parenthesis in a lower tone, at the end of which, after another slight pause, the former tone of voice, which was interrupted, should be resumed, so that the connection between the former and latter part of the interrupted sentence may be restored. The parenthesis should also be pronounced one degree quicker than the rest of the sentence, as this still better distinguishes it from the rest of the sentence.

* Note falling circumflex, in which there is first an 'upward,' then a 'downward,' slide of the voice.

† Note rising circumflex, in which there is first a 'downward,' then an 'upward,' slide of the voice.

Five examples of the parenthesis may be taken from Holy Scripture, thus :

‘And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine : and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (*they were about two thousand*), and were choked in the sea’ (Mark v. 13).

Again :

‘When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (*though Jesus Himself baptized not, but His disciples*), He left Judea, and departed into Galilee’ (John iv. 1-3).

Again :

‘And the other disciples came in a little ship (*for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits*), dragging the net with fishes’ (John xxi. 8).

Again :

‘And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said (*the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty*), Men and brethren’ (Acts i. 15, 16).

Once more :

‘The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ (*He is Lord of all*) : That word, I say, ye know’ (Acts x. 36, 37).

Two familiar instances are also constantly heard by us in church, in the prayer for our Queen, in our Communion Service, in which occur the words :

‘So rule the heart of Thy chosen servant VICTORIA, our Queen and Governor, that she (*knowing whose minister she is*) may above all things seek Thy honour and glory : And that we, and all her subjects (*duly considering whose authority she hath*), may faithfully serve, honour, and humbly obey her.’

In each example of the parenthesis, I have placed the words in italics in order to call the attention of the student to

the manner in which they are interjected into the sentence, and if left out they would in no way interrupt the sense.

What applies to the reading of one parenthesis is equally applicable to the reading of all. The parenthesis is an important point in good reading, and is by no means to be considered a 'trifle,' or one to be overlooked.

It is impossible for me to overstate the importance to Englishmen and Englishwomen of the whole subject upon which I have undertaken to write; for, in the words of Locke, 'the man who speaks with culture and ability will always command willing listeners.'

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE MODULATION OF THE VOICE.

‘The living voice is the grand ordained instrument for the world’s awakening and redemption.’ —

SHEPARD.

THERE are two things which must always combine to form an orator. The first is good matter; the second, good manner. The former is far the more indispensable of the two; but if either be wanting, completeness is destroyed. If a man could possess only one of these, he would wisely say, ‘Give me good matter, and let good manner go the wall.’ But in this country we have exalted the former of these too much at the expense of the latter. We have not, indeed, thought too highly of good matter, but we have thought too slightly of good manner. And if it be true that manner goes nearly half the way in forming the cultured orator, my readers will not think that I am undervaluing the importance of matter when I vindicate and enforce the claims of manner.

But what is manner? It comprehends everything that can achieve the effective delivery of our thoughts from ourselves to our hearers. No doubt the grand excellence of manner throughout is NATURALNESS; our own nature, not another man’s. Even this, with a degree of roughness and awkwardness, is better than any amount of fine and palpable artifice. One

touch of nature is better than all the studied and mechanical graces of address. As a means of securing naturalness, EARNESTNESS is of the first importance. Indeed, it is indispensable. There can be no sympathy awakened in the hearer when there is a frozen manner in the speaker. What should we think of a man who came to tell us his house was in flames with the same indifference as if he was asking, 'What o'clock is it ?' The first impulse would be to say, 'I do not believe you.' So it is that the actor, who deals only in fiction, will agitate, melt, and sway an assembly; while he who deals in momentous truth may induce drowsiness and indifference. Why is this ? 'Because' (in the oft-quoted reply of the actor Betterton to Bishop Porteus, Bishop of London) 'we are in earnest.'

It is not, then, too much to affirm that a good manner is a help to good matter. It is the setting to the jewel; it will not only help the speaker to get hearers, but also to get a hearing. It will not only secure attendance, but attention. Often the attendance is much better than the attention. A building may be full of ears, but not full of hearers. Assuredly, if you put up sleepy speakers, you will make sleepy hearers. The dull, heavy, monotonous speaker will soon turn any assembly into a 'dormitory'. But let another speaker rise, let another voice of cultivated and varying tone be heard, diffusing warmth and arousing interest, and deaf ears will hear and frigid hearts feel. There is always hope for an earnest speaker. 'Faith [in any cause] comes by hearing'—not by being in the place of hearing, but by being compelled by the speaker to listen.

One main instrument included in a good manner is the strength, scope, sweetness, modulation, range and variety of the *voice*. I spoke in an earlier chapter upon the use, training, and discipline of the voice, and I dwelt upon three points :

The necessity of being heard;

The necessity of sustaining the voice;
The necessity of daily practice.

I propose now to direct the student to a point of extreme importance :

THE MODULATION OF THE VOICE.

Those who adopt the monotone in reading will take no interest in this part of our subject. They have 'cut the knot' by taking the matter into their own hands, and delivering everything they read or speak in a dead monotone.

I have no wish to condemn the monotone. There are minds so attuned that the monotone deepens their devotion. No doubt the practice of intoning arose from the feeling that it was devotional, and also from the fact that in our large cathedrals (which in their acoustic properties seem made for music, but were not constructed with the view of speaking) the intoning of one note carries further than the spoken word, and the wear and tear on the intoning voice is also less, in a large building full of echoes, than on the spoken voice, which, to be true to Nature, must be modulated like the light and shade in a picture. But I contend that, if our task is to read the thoughts of great writers or to speak our own, so as to rivet the attention of an audience, we must discard the monotone, and illustrate those thoughts by a voice trained and modulated by the same process of study and practice as that by which the singer arrives at excellence. The great complaint laid to the charge of readers and speakers in general is monotony.

Here the question will arise, 'Can anyone modulate the voice unless he has a good ear ?' This is difficult to answer. I feel inclined to say that a good ear is necessary to good reading and speaking, and that no one without an ear for music is likely to prove a good reader or attractive speaker. Yet I have known some instances of admirable readers who had little or

no ear for music or modulation. W.C. Macready told me that he was so absolutely without an ear for music that he could not distinguish one tune from another. 'They had to tell me,' he said, 'when music was concluded in the theatre, or I should not have known; and yet I could roll my voice from the top to the bottom of its compass.'

There is comfort for us all in this, as all of us are certainly not endowed with a good ear, and the instances I have known go far to prove that mind and intelligence are the first great requirements. This was notably the case with Macready. He was the greatest reader I have ever listened to. He could make more of a single word than the rest of us can do with a whole page. On one occasion, when I was staying with him at Cheltenham, where he spent his closing years, I drew from him some reminiscences of the days when he stood at his zenith—

'the voice of fame to hear,
That sweetest music to a human ear'*

—and he told me, but with that modesty for which he was distinguished, that 'once in New York he read to a large assembly, by request, the Story of Joseph from the Bible, and before he had concluded, there was not a dry eye in the audience.' I can quite believe it. Does not such a reminiscence as this speak to us clergy? How many of us are there, in our day, of whom it could be said that, if we read the Story of Joseph in our churches, 'there was not a dry eye in the audience?' Are there any? I fear not one. Yet, surely, what was done by a great actor ought to be done by us clergy. When there is half the pains bestowed on the use of the tongue which is now employed on the use of the pen, we too shall sway, and move, convince, and persuade our hearers.

* Pope.

We shall be wise, as a body of teachers, if we remember how much we have yet to learn. And never let us be above taking a hint. Apelles was a wise man when he altered the shoe in his picture at the suggestion of a cobbler. It is our own fault if we fail to learn from those who have gone before us.

The question reverts, 'Can anyone modulate the voice?' I answer, Yes. The simple rule I give is this : Listen to yourself. We are all keen listeners to others. It does not sound so easy to listen to one's own voice; but, on reflection, it is not so difficult. When we call to one at a distance, we raise our voice to the upper pitch; when to one close to us, we drop it to the lower pitch; and when at a medium distance we raise it to the middle pitch. In the first case the voice rises to about the eighth note, in the second it drops to the first or lowest note; in the last place it falls on about the fourth or mid-level note. The student can easily ascertain on what particular note the voice is pitched by pronouncing the words Eel, Old, and All, as indicated in the notes of the following scale, commencing at the top :

VOICE INTONATIONS.

First —Eel.	High note.
Second—Old	Medium note.
Third—All	Low note.

Any student who will practise the above scale will at once perceive what is meant by the 'modulation of the voice,' and will be able to raise, lower, or drop the voice. This is a subject which requires thoughtful study and considerable vocal practice. In fact, my own experience goes to prove that the reader needs quite as conscientious practice of the speaking voice as the vocalist needs of the singing voice, and the shades of intonation are quite as perceptible in the one case, as in the other. Indeed, I am bold enough to say that there is nothing in singing which may not be found in speaking. Pitch, force,

time, elevation or depression of voice, loudness or softness—all these are found in speaking as well as in singing. The daily practice of these modulations of voice, which I recommend to every student who is interested in this subject, and feels that it opens to him the gate of self-improvement, will render the voice both flexible and controllable, and bring into its use variety of tone, which lends half the charm to our reading and speaking. It is this which gives variety and shade to thought and feeling.

I trust that this will also serve to illustrate to the reader what I have called the rising (´) and falling (`) inflection, in which the voice steps up and down by degrees—or, as some describe it, ‘slides up to the higher, or down to the lower pitch.’ Let it be an infallible rule to commence speaking on the mid-level or natural tone of the voice. From that tone you can rise or fall as you please, always returning to the mid-level note of your voice, which is with all of us our natural voice. If you commence too high or too low, you will rarely recover yourself, or feel ‘at home,’ in speaking. Look at those of your audience who are about three-fourths of the building distant from you, and you will not greatly err in the pitch of voice in which to speak as naturally as if you are speaking to your most intimate friend.

Garrick surpassed his predecessors in the sweetness, tones and pathos of his voice, on which, as on an instrument, he could portray all the feelings of human nature.

A gentleman once asked his servant, who had accompanied him to the theatre, what he thought of the great Garrick. ‘Not much, sir, as an actor. Why, he acted just as John and I talk in the kitchen.’ When this was repeated to the tragedian, he declared it to be the greatest compliment ever paid him. ‘If,’ said he, ‘Nature’s own children cannot distinguish me from themselves, it is a pretty sure sign that I am about right.’

CHAPTER IX.

THE LIPS, TEETH, AND TONGUE.

‘No man is an orator who has not learned to be so,’

CICERO.

IT seems a piece of unnecessary advice to say to every speaker :

OPEN YOUR LIPS.

Yet how few of us do it ! How few of us ever think of it, when speaking in public to some hundreds of people, and when it is our duty to make every one of them hear. When our Divine Master was on earth, His critics said, ‘How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?’ And His enemies had to confess, ‘Never man spake like this man.’ Now, although we know that the Spirit of God was given to Him without measure, and that ‘gracious’ words flowed from His lips as light from the sun, yet we cannot read and study His words without feeling that He was the most human of speakers, for He spake to humanity. He must have been the most natural, simple and easy speaker the world ever heard. The highest compliment ever paid to Him was not when the learned Rabbi Nicodemus said to Him, ‘We know that Thou art a teacher come from God,’ but when we are told ‘the common people heard Him gladly.’ Why ? Because He spake to them without

an effort. When we speak it is generally too apparent that it is a great effort. But He spake spontaneously, humanly, naturally. He spake to them like one of themselves.

Before He commenced His Sermon on the Mount,* we read, 'He opened His mouth.' And when we begin to read and study that sermon (which gives us one of the few specimens extant of the exquisite perfection of His oratory), let us who have to be speakers, and would learn to be speakers, not overlook this, that 'He opened His mouth.' I know there have been various opinions as to the meaning of these words. Stier says of them : 'Humanity is the mouth of creation; Christ is the mouth of humanity.' Luther says of them : 'Open thy mouth, speak boldly, finish quickly'—very good advice to all speakers.

But if we may take these words—'He opened His mouth'—more literally, they cover the first point I wish in this chapter to impress on every speaker and reader. If any student whom I have the privilege of addressing in these pages will lay his hand on each jaw, close to the ear, and then open the mouth to speak, he will perceive the movement that takes place beneath his hands. And it is a hint to him of the great necessity of training himself to remember to open the mouth.

The throat is to the human voice what the sounding-board is to the piano. It throws the voice of the speaker forward into the building, so as to reach every hearer; but if the jaw be not opened, if the mouth be not opened, if the lips be not well parted, how can the voice find egress, and how can the speaker be heard ?

This may seem commonplace advice, but a little reflection will remind us that it is invaluable to every speaker to

* St. Matt. v., vi., and vii.

remember, and that it is too generally forgotten, especially by those who have never been taught how to speak.

It is equally necessary to say :

OPEN THE TEETH.

What is that which makes a singer ? You may reply, 'A voice.' No; that endows him. It is method that makes the singer. We know this by what we have all read on 'voice production.' But how can the voice be produced if the mouth and teeth be not opened ? Who has not often noticed, in listening to some of our greatest and best-taught singers, the perfect ease with which the notes come ? There is no straining of the voice, no unnatural effort; and as you look at the singer, you see that one great secret of this mastery of the art is that, when a student, he had the good fortune to fall into the hands of a teacher who knew the method of opening the mouth and teeth. For in singing there are 'teachers *and* teachers.' In speaking there are also 'teachers *and* teachers'; and I warn young students to beware into whose hands they place themselves. There are public teachers—rather let me say advertising teachers—who simply spoil everyone who learns from them. I have heard clergy deliver the Ten Commandments in the most bombastic, inflated, stilted style, because they have had the misfortune to place themselves in the hands of some quack teacher.

I am earnestly endeavouring, in these pages, to guard students against an artificial, non-natural style. Reality must come before everything else. Let a stammering peasant be put to plead for his life, and he will be eloquent. Let a minister of the Gospel be deeply impressed with the truth of his message, and he will be eloquent. He will make you understand the message, because he understands it himself. He will make you feel it, because he feels it himself. Would you know the

tremendous difference between the mere declaimer and the honest speaker ? The former sinks his message in himself; the latter sinks himself in his message. The first speaks for himself; the second pleads for God. The one seeks the approbation of his hearers; the other, their good. Mere declamation differs from fervid eloquence as the cold, transparent ice differs from the warm, glowing fire.

Of course, the opening of the lips and the opening of the teeth may seem to be the same thing, as they must go together. And yet they are not without a distinction. Because, to everyone who wishes to be a distinct, articulate speaker, I say : Practise to speak and finish all your consonants off the teeth*. The recollection of this, while you are speaking, will do more than I can describe with the pen to make you speak with ease and clearness. It will, in fact, enable you to fill a large building and address large audiences without the slightest straining of the voice. You will feel that you are heard, and that every word you utter falls off the teeth as clear as a bell.

This brings me to speak of

THE OFFICE OF THE TONGUE.

We are told in the Book of books that 'the tongue is a little member'; but, in the matter of speaking, the tongue is really a great member. Situated as it is, in the wonderful mechanism of the mouth, every sound that is spoken comes over it, and it only needs a little thought to feel how large a part the tongue takes in the utterance of every word. One has only to utter the letters of the alphabet to learn that even in the five vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*, the tongue, though almost motionless, takes its part, while in fifteen consonants of the alphabet,

* Except those consonants produced by the tongue (as K), by the lips (as P), and off the palate (as Y in *you, yacht*, etc.)

namely, *c, d, g, h, j, k, l, n, q, r, s, t, w, x, z*, the tongue is actively engaged; so that there are only five labial letters in which the tongue takes little or no part, namely, *b, f, m, p, v*, which are mainly formed by the lips, independent of the tongue.

Every careful speaker will perceive that the tongue, therefore, takes a very considerable part in all our utterances, and it may safely be said that the tongue helps the teeth to the formation of our words.

The lips, teeth, and tongue, are the only organs employed in the formation of all the letters of the alphabet, which are made by soft or strong pressure, but all force is to be avoided. Thus, the *d* is made by strong pressure of the tongue against the palate of the mouth; *g* and *j* by strong pressure of the flat surface of the tongue against the fore-palate; while *c, k*, and *q*, have the soft pressure of the tongue. *Z* is by strong pressure of the tongue against the fore-palate, while *s* is produced by an equivalent soft pressure; *l* and *n* require strong pressure of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, a little distance from the upper front-teeth, while *r* is produced by a slight vibration at the point of the tongue. I may add, as a rule, that the tongue should never be seen outside the teeth; all its work is done at the back of the teeth.

I cannot expect the mere general reader to take an interest in these niceties of the work of the tongue in speaking; to the student, however, they will be both interesting and useful. He has only to make for himself a practice framed on the production of these letters, and he will see that they are all produced by the combined work of lips, teeth, and tongue. It will amply repay him to link these three together, whenever he practises reading aloud, alone or in public. and often to recall the office of each of them in speaking. To do this will secure three things which are of vital importance :

Clear enunciation;
Distinct articulation;
Ease in speaking.

In all these pages my object is to show that reading and speaking are an art, and a laborious art, too, and that he who would excel must make up his mind to study them. The value of study is this : that it enables one to do at all times what Nature does upon rare and few occasions. It is hopeless to put the untrained and unpractised above the trained and practised in any art or calling. There are some few people who naturally sing well, without study; but they would sing infinitely better if they had studied the art of singing. There are some—but they are very few—gifted with voice, feeling and intelligence, who naturally speak and read well; but they would speak and read infinitely better if they had studied. No one can hope to be a scholar, or painter, or sculptor, or musician, who has not studied. What is there in reading and speaking that they should be learnt without laborious study, or that they should be left, as is usual, by the majority of us to the impulse of the moment ? And who does not acknowledge the superior value of that which we obtain by industry and diligence over that which we possess without either ? The latter may be compared to a fortune bequeathed, which is often squandered by him who gets it too easily; the former to a fortune won by thrift and industry, whose possessor by his very toil in winning it has acquired also the wisdom to take care of it. A man may flatter himself that he has done everything when he has hewn out a block of marble, but he must hand it to the sculptor to ‘find the angel’ which lies hid somewhere in that block. We must not only hew Truth out of the quarry, but we must shape, chisel, and polish it by all the means in our power.

It may be said, 'Truth is truth, and no awkwardness of ours can change its nature.' Yes; but our blunders may utterly discount its reception, and in order to reach the mind truth can scarcely be polished too much. Make it, if you can, like the surface of a mirror, which is so highly polished that even a single breath can cloud it. We might just as well say, 'Meat is meat, and no method of administering it can change it.' But if you give that meat to an infant, the answer is, 'Meat is not meat, but under certain circumstances it becomes poison; and even meat to a man in sickness is not the same as meat to a man in health.'

Words so spoken that, through the ear, they pierce the intellect and penetrate the heart, are the words we all want to hear. Their fitness to do this must depend mainly on the way in which they are spoken. It is a great mistake, because we prize the truth above everything, to pronounce rhetoric to be wholly artificial and useless in presenting it to the mind. There was a time when the shepherd boy's sling and pebbles were more useful to David than the armour of King Saul. It is all very well to say, 'Lose sight of your rules of art, and trust in God to send you a Divine impulse.' But very few of us who have trusted our speaking to that advice have found ourselves to be 'inspired.' He is the wiser speaker who, while he is careful of Matter, is not careless of the Manner. The history of the world is full of testimony to prove how much depends on industry.

Edwards says wisely : 'If knowledge is not to be despised, then it follows that the means of obtaining it are not to be neglected, namely, patient study; for though the heart, full of the Spirit of God, may, at favoured times, enable a man to speak profitably and excellently, yet this does not warrant his casting himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple in dependence upon God, if he has neglected study.'

I do not forget, however, in urging all that study and culture can do, that what we should aim at is, not to admire the speaker, but to follow him. The ancient historian tells us this constituted the difference between Cicero, the polished speaker, and Demosthenes, the burning orator. After a great speech in Rome every tongue was loud in the praise of Cicero. But the people who listened to Demosthenes forgot the orator. They went home with hurried stride, lowering brow, clenched fist, muttering in a voice like distant thunder, 'Let us go and fight Philip !'

CHAPTER X.

ON DELIVERY.

‘Too little care is taken to improve men in their own language, so that they may be masters of it.’ —

LOCKE.

It is said that when Demosthenes was asked the rules of oratory, he answered, ‘The first is delivery; the second, delivery; and the third, delivery.’ This is another way of saying that an orator should so speak as to teach, to please, and to persuade. The father of Demosthenes died when he was seven years old. His guardians wasted his property, and at the age of seventeen he appeared against them in court to plead his own cause, but he made a perfect failure; after which he retired, studied, and practised till he was twenty-five, and at the end of this eight years commenced his brilliant career. He had three particular defects : first, weakness of voice, which he strengthened by declaiming on the sea-shore, amid the roar of the sea; second, shortness of breath, which he remedied by repeating his orations as he walked up hill; third, a mumbling, thick, and hesitating utterance, which he overcame by reading and reciting with pebbles in his mouth.*

* I have already mentioned how desirable it is for the student to cut a cork, three-quarters of an inch high, and place it between the front-teeth, and practise reading aloud till the jaw is tired; then remove the ‘gag,’ and read without the cork. This is splendid practice.

Few, if any, were therefore better qualified than he to say that the first, second, and last rule of oratory is delivery, of which he himself became such a perfect master. Æschines, the rival of Demosthenes, once said to an assembly which was greatly moved by his reading to them one of the orations of Demosthenes, 'What if you had heard him !' And yet this was the orator who was once hissed from the rostrum for the badness of his delivery. Cicero, also, at the commencement of his career, failed through weakness of voice and an excessive vehemence of manner, which wearied his hearers and defeated his own purpose. These defects he conquered by study and discipline. He passed not a day without rhetorical exercises.

These and other great men submitted themselves to long and laborious discipline. Some of the greatest orators of antiquity, so far from being favoured by natural gifts—except, indeed, in their high intellectual endowments—had to struggle against natural defects, and, instead of leaping spontaneously into unrivalled eminence, forced their way, step by step, by unflagging industry and continuous toil. They were all, according to their ability and station, orators; not by nature or accident, but by education. Yet in contradiction to this, the almost universal feeling appears to be that industry can effect nothing, that eminence is the result of accident, and that everyone can read. For any other art a man would have to serve an apprenticeship, and be willing to undergo this condition in order to learn; and yet he fancies that the grandest, most varied, and most expressive of all instruments, the voice, may be played upon without study or practice. I am endeavouring throughout these pages to show that the very reverse is the case, that success is always the reward of industry and pains. No eminent orator has lived who was not an example of the truth of this.

The great end of teaching is to enable men to get beyond the want of teaching. In other words, the end of all instruction is to enable men to instruct themselves.

In this chapter I am treating on a subject of primary importance.

DELIVERY.

Without doubt the best delivery is that which is the most natural, the most free from trick and artifice, and that in which the speaker is most self-forgetful. Never think of yourself when speaking, but only of your subject. Every sentence may be a flower, but the hand of the gardener must not be seen. Every line may be music, but the musician must be neither seen nor heard. The modest speaker always labours to obliterate himself. What was the great secret of Thomas Chalmers' success ? It was that he abandoned the measured, artificial delivery, and adopted the colloquial, offensive to the ears of scholars and literary men, but acceptable to, and understood by, the people who flocked to hear him. He addressed men according to their character and habit of mind. In every assembly few of our hearers are thinkers or readers, but they have come disposed to listen, if we can attract and hold their attention. The trust is, that it is not the weight of thought, or profoundness of argument, or choice of language, which attract and chain the attention even of educated hearers who may be able to appreciate them all. They can find thought, argument, and language in their library. It is not these which interest a mixed assembly so much as the irresistible charm of a natural delivery, an earnest and sincere manner, and a well-modulated voice. Every day's observation in life shows us that a good delivery in the speaker will secure and retain the attention, while a bad delivery will render tedious the most profound arguments. And

the delivery which is so attractive is not the studied, artificial, rhetorical disquisition, but the natural, free, animated utterance which seems to come from the heart; which may, indeed, be blemished by faults, and yet enthral the hearers by its sincerity. In saying this I am thinking of the best speakers one has read of or heard. I know that all of us cannot be good speakers and excellent readers; but we can all be much better than we are.

We all express ourselves with more animation and truer emphasis in speaking than in reading; hence it follows that we can listen longer to an indifferent speaker than to an indifferent reader. There is an indescribable advantage on the side of the speaker who is earnestly expressing his thoughts in natural tones, which is altogether wanting in the drowsy uniformity of the man who reads. Very few can give to the writings of another the spirit which they can infuse into their own thoughts. There was wisdom in the advice given to a young preacher : 'Limit a written sermon to twenty minutes, a spoken one to half an hour.'

Let there be sent into the field of life two candidates. One of them shall have only respectable talents, but shall excel as a speaker. The other shall have transcendent talents, but shall be a tame, lifeless, monotonous speaker. Yet it is the fact, based on all experience and observation, that the former shall be heard with ten times more interest and attention than the latter. You may say that people are fools for being caught with manner rather than matter. Yes; but fools they will be as long as they live, and while the world stands. Every public speaker knows, whether he admit it or no, that it depends on the tone of his voice, and the attractiveness of his delivery, whether he shall hold or lose the attention of his hearers.

George Whitfield was a remarkable instance of the power of delivery. He studied it till he became perfect master of it, in order to subordinate it to the higher ends; for never did he allow the truth to lose its edge because he studied how to speak it. He bestowed both prayer and pains. It was he who said, 'A sermon made for everybody is like a coat made for everybody; it may fit nobody. Therefore I never preach a sermon to others which I have not first preached to myself.' Hence his knowledge of the human heart, and his familiarity with the heartbreaking truths of the Gospel, combined with his great simplicity and earnestness. It was of him it was said that 'He talked in the pulpit of another world like one who had been there, and who had come back expressly to tell others something about it.'

From all this let the student gather that continuous practice and assiduous cultivation are necessary to a good delivery. Yet most Englishmen, in Parliament, in the Church, at the Bar, seem to think that, if it comes at all, it must come spontaneously. 'If a man is to be an orator,' say they, 'he is born an orator.' This is contrary to all the experience of the past. All the finished speakers of the past became so by a toil and practice which ended only with life. Nevertheless, men start on their professional career as speakers, and expect success, with untutored and untrained voice. I am not, however, urging anyone to aim at rhetoric as an end, but as a means to an end. Rhetoric will not enter the hearts of men. A sword may be so rhetorically burnished as to lose its edge. No man must be in servile bondage to rules. They may prove as chains round the feet, only crippling the walker and hindering from free motion. A man may study Blair's 'Rules of Rhetoric,' or those of anyone else, and rise from the study finished and

faultless, but also lifeless and powerless. Beware of slavish attention to rules. Nothing must supersede Nature. She knows more than Art. Therefore let her come first, and let Art be her servant. Feeling is the soul of oratory. One thrill of genuine feeling is of more value than all the rhetorical rules of ancient or modern times. If there be feeling in your own heart, it will send its electric pulse through other hearts. The best rule is :

FEEL EVERY WORD YOU UTTER.

Then the living thought will speak the winged word; for 'thoughts that breathe' will always find 'words that burn.'

CHAPTER XI.

ON ACCENT.

‘He that does not know that which is necessary, is an ignorant man, whatever else he may know.’ —

ARCHBISHOP TILLOTSON.

CICERO said, ‘The poet is born such; the orator is made such.’ Yet the mere reading books of rhetoric, or choice morsels of poetry and eloquence, will never make one an orator. These are only the effects of oratory. The cause is to be sought for in the human mind. No one can read or speak effectively without thought and feeling. How can we speak of or describe anything to others unless we have thought it out for ourselves ? It is, however, difficult to get people to think of what they read. Thought—fixed thought—is often a very hard thing to command; but reading—without thought—is to the mind what food is to the stomach without digestion. Thought is mental sight. Words are the means by which we convey thought, and the voice is the medium; so that the three main things we have to recollect in all good speaking and reading are : thought, words, and voice. There may be said to be two kinds of language : the artificial or conventional, consisting of words; and the natural, consisting of thought, mind-feeling, tones, and looks. To become an orator I must study both kinds of language, that of art and that of Nature.

Clergy, barristers, and the House of Commons, from their education, in most cases at our public schools and Universities, ought to be the standard authorities for good reading and speaking; but, unfortunately, in consequence of their deficiencies and inaccuracies, they constitute a court of error instead of appeal; consequently we must throw ourselves upon first principles and our own resources. Where is the really good teacher of reading to be found ? or where is any man to be heard, in the present generation, who is the exponent of faultlessly good speaking ? It is one thing to know what to teach; it is quite another to know how to teach it. Beware, therefore, of pinning your faith to another's sleeve—of forming your opinions or style entirely on that of another. Strive to attain modest independence, and keep yourself clear of 'leading-strings.' 'Never be the mere shadow of another.'

The subject of our present chapter is

ACCENT.

Accent is defined, in philology, to be the distinguishing of one syllable in a word from others. To accomplish this, two factors are needed : the voice and the ear. The voice is, or ought to be, the docile slave of the ear; and the ear should be delicately attuned to the voice. Accent means stress or quantity of voice on a certain syllable or syllables in a word; it is made by concentrating the voice on that particular part of the word. The ancient Greeks and Romans understood this thoroughly, because they learned to speak by ear more than by letters. Instead of having manuscripts before them, they memorized their contents, and made the thoughts their own. When an author wished to have his work published, he used the living voice, either of himself or of a public orator, instead of the printer, and the greater the effect of the speaker, the greater the reputation of the author. The voice with them was the

instrument which they trained and tuned to the highest perfection. The term 'accent,' with them, probably contributed to make their speech musical. With us it means only the manner of distinguishing one syllable of a word from the rest. This we call the accent. Every word in our language of more than one syllable must have an accented syllable in it. Thus, 'glōry,' 'fāthēr,' 'hōly,' the first syllable being long, the second short; so that the accent expresses time rather than tune, quantity rather than quality. Of course, smoothness ought always to be aimed at. In the word 'vīctōry,' the accent, or stress of voice, is laid on the first syllable. Yet care should be taken by every good speaker that the whole word is spoken, and that it is not 'vict'ry,' or 'victory,' but 'victory.' The word 'hārmōny' is treated in the same way; yet how many speak it as if it was 'harminy' instead of 'harmony' !

Still, the accent is necessarily changed in the words 'victoriōus' and 'harmōnious,' the seat of accent being shifted from the first syllable to the second. There are many words where the same process takes place. In the following words the accent is at the beginning : 'Industry,' 'ēmpphasis,' 'īnjury,' 'īmpetus'; but the accent is shifted to the second syllable in 'indūstrious,' 'emphātic,' 'injūrious,' 'impētuous.'

The importance of proper accent is notable in such words as 'heaven' and 'devil.' When the word 'heaven' is pronounced as if written 'heav'n,' it is perfectly correct; but when it is by some speakers divided into two syllables, as if written 'heaven,' it is utterly wrong. And the word 'devil,' when pronounced as if written 'dev'l,' is perfectly correct, but when divided, as by some speakers, into two syllables, as if dev-vil,' it is utterly wrong. There are words which consist of syllables of equal time or length, as 'ēmpire,' 'fārewell,' and 'āmēn.'

In some words the seat of the accent is changed by a corresponding change in the meaning, as 'August,' 'augŭst'; 'produce'; găllant,' 'gallânt.'

In other words, the seat of the accent is changed according to the sense, as : 'The côm-pact was entered into in a compăct manner.' 'The linen, when compressed, makes a compress for the throat.' There are words, on the other hand, which cannot undergo any change of accent, such as 'beguile,' 'indeed,' 'delay,' and *revenge*.' The accent on the word 'Emmanuel' lies on the second syllable; and it seems impossible for the voice by any process to shift if from the syllable 'man.'

There are words in which the accent comes not at the beginning, but at the end, such as, 'apprehend,' 'superintend,' 'attend,' 'awry,' 'believe,' and many others.

There are words as to which the speaker may choose for himself which usage of the accent he will adopt, such as 'illustrate' or 'ill-ustrate,' 'fanatic' or 'fan-atic,' but having chosen your own pronunciation, adhere to it. Consistency is of much importance in good speaking as in all other things.

I append an exercise for the student, which will set him thinking on this interesting subject of accent. 'On her *en-trance*, the room was *per-fumed* with *per-fume*. She was *en-tranced* at being escorted by a grand *es-cort*.'

'Af-fix the *af-fix* to the right syllable. Lay the *accent* on the *ac-cented* word, which is *attribute*, not *at-tribute*.'

'They *con-cert* a plan to get up a *concert* of *concerted* music; in which they *con-crete* the *con-crete* tones with such admirable *côn-duct* as to *con-duct* the whole to the entire satisfaction of the audience.'

The subject of accent is of primary importance to everyone who really desires to study the art of reading and speaking : it should, therefore, be dwelt upon by the student till its principle and application are perfectly familiar. Its first use is to thread syllables together; its second use is to aid us in acquiring a threefold advantage : (1) correct pronunciation, (2) distinct articulation, (3) melody in speech. So that it is not too much to say that accent is the thread with which we make the garments for our thoughts, and clothe them with feeling and music. The careful practice of accent will effectually prevent, or correct, a very common fault in reading, which is the habit of slurring over words so that they cannot be heard, and as if they were of no importance—clipping words. The slovenly reader says, ‘I ’kngo, ‘ ‘you ’knsee,’ ‘they ’kncome’; but a careful reader says, ‘I can go,’ ‘you can see,’ ‘they can come.’ How, I ask, can any impression be made in reading, when half the words are slurred or skipped in the delivery ? Yet, it is no exaggeration to say that this is done in numberless instances by the clergy in reading the Bible, or our Liturgy, or in their own utterances.

It takes more time to eradicate bad habits than to acquire good ones in speaking, as in everything; yet it has frequently happened that clergy and others have written to me, asking if I can tell them of a good teacher from whom they could take a ‘few lessons.’ As if any teacher ever existed, who could in three or four months give them the last polish in reading and speaking, whereas, if one may continue the metaphor, what they require is a scrubbing-brush to rub away the errors of many years, which have become like second nature to them. As well might we expect that three or four months’ stay in England, and a ‘few lessons,’ would suffice to rid the Irishman of his brogue or the Scotchman of his dialect. Curran, the

celebrated Irish orator, presents a signal instance of what can be accomplished by assiduity and perseverance. His enunciation was so precipitate and confused that he was called Stuttering Jack. To overcome his numerous defects, he devoted a portion of every day to reading and reciting aloud some of the most eloquent extracts of our language. This he did slowly, distinctly, and deliberately. His success was so complete that among his excellences as a speaker was a clear articulation, and appropriate intonation which melodized every sentence in his thrilling speeches.

CHAPTER XII.

SOME OF OUR FAULTS.

‘Thou speakest the things thou oughtest to speak; but not after the manner that thou shouldst speak them.’—

PLUTARCH.

GOOD speaking occupied a much larger place in the estimation of the ancients than it does among us. The orator then combined in himself speech, pamphlet, newspaper and book. When Demosthenes was to speak, Greece flocked to hear him. When Cicero spoke, Rome hung on his lips. They very rarely committed their discourse to paper; but their spoken orations were distinguished for exquisite finish and perfect polish.

Lord Macaulay says : ‘It may be doubted whether any compositions which have ever been produced in the world are equally perfect in their kind with the great Athenian orations.’

But another engine was invented whose power has become almost unlimited. I refer to the Press. The human voice can reach but few : the Press speaks to all. It may be asked, How does this tell on oratory ? Does it tend to raise the standard of good speaking ? Quite the reverse. Take our House of Commons. A hundred years ago scarcely any report of what transpired within its walls got publicity. Then everything depended on the impression the speaker made on those who

were actually present. Then, as Macaulay says, 'The fame of a speaker out of doors depended entirely on the report of those who were within doors.' Now, through the press, when a statesman speaks the nation is his audience. Six hundred members may hear a speech delivered, but the next morning, in the penny and halfpenny newspapers, a million readers will know nothing of the modulation of the voice; the passionate feeling; the articulate words falling off the lips, like golden coins struck from the mint. Pitt possessed these qualifications in a marvellous degree :

'Of piercing wit, and pregnant thought,
Endowed by nature, and by learning taught
To move assemblies.'*

In the printed page all this has vanished. We can only picture it.

In ancient Greece and Rome the orator's education began from infancy; with us it often begins the first time a member of Parliament rises to make his maiden speech. If Englishwomen spoke their language with grace and sweetness, if Englishmen spoke it with care and culture, the seeds of eloquence would be sown in the home, and the child, in his everyday language, would become a good speaker without knowing it. No wonder, when our children are not taught how to speak in the home, when our boys are not taught their own language in our public schools, that they go out into their professions—the Bar, the Church, and Parliament—such insipid speakers. Addison thus describes them in his time (I fear it is true to-day) : 'Our preachers stand stock still in the pulpit, and will not so much as move a finger to set off the best sermon in the world. We meet with the same speaking statues at the Bar, and in the public places of debate. Our

* Dryden.

words are uttered without that culture of the voice, motion of the body, and majesty of the hand, for which the orators of Greece and Rome were so celebrated. We can talk of life and death in cold blood. Our zeal is not able to stir a limb about us.* In addition to their early teaching, the course of study and severe training to which the ancients subjected themselves is almost incredible. Demosthenes is said to have written out the whole of Thucydides eight times with his own hand, to impress the style of the great historian on his memory. No wonder he could repeat Thucydides by heart. He stands at the head of all masters of speech as the never-equalled orator. He has always been considered unapproachable. There is not a word that could be added without weakening him. 'His flood of speech rolled on as in a channel ever full, which never overflowed.' † And yet it has been said that, to us, 'the greater part of Demosthenes is wanting, for he must have been heard, not read.' This is true of all great orators of the past.

If, in these pages, I can inspire my readers to become enthusiasts over their own language, I shall be richly rewarded. I am aware that I write to men who are already embarked in their calling—to men who are busy. 'How am I now to find time for self-culture?' is a common question. I answer there is no vocation whatever, which will not give a man, who has the inclination, a little time every day for the study of what he feels to be necessary. An earnest purpose either finds time or makes it. It seizes fragments of time, and turns them into gold. Often those who have the most time at their command profit by it the least. A single half-hour daily given to this subject will bring an unexpected reward. Of all studies, there is none so interesting and useful to an Englishman as his own language—how to speak it, so that a man may attain to what

* Spectator

† Lord Brougham

Carlyle calls ‘graceful, ingenious, illuminative speaking.’ And certainly every Englishman, if he will, can learn to speak clearly, forcibly, and agreeably. My subject—to which I intend my words in this chapter to lead up—is :

SOME OF OUR FAULTS.

In touching on these, I may seem to recapitulate some of the ground which we have already traversed in earlier chapters. ‘My faults !’ says someone; ‘everyone can read.’

‘Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us,

To see oursel’s as ithers see us.’*

Of the early taint of imperfect education in speaking our own tongue few of us ever get rid through life, which is the reason that so few are found whose reading can be enjoyed. But they who have had the good fortune when young to have been taught to read well, or who, by dint of attention and practice, have overcome early bad habits, will always be able to read with a smooth and agreeable voice, which I will call melody; with those changes of light and shade that relieve monotony, which I will call variety; and with that finer melody of the feelings and mind, which I will call expression. The entanglements of faults contracted by early wrong instruction (or neglect of instruction), and knit together by the force of prejudice and habit, are to be unravelled only by a patient hand.

In speaking of ‘Some of our Faults,’ I should like to ‘hold up a mirror’ in which none of us can see anyone except himself. The difficulty is that in nothing more than in speaking or reading do we ‘see the mote’ in another’s eye; and overlook ‘the beam’ in our own eye. The old adage is too often true : ‘No man’s tune is displeasing to himself.’

* Robert Burns.

PROVINCIALISMS.

All peculiarities are to be overcome. If you are Irish, labour to get rid of the brogue—if Scotch, to get rid of the accent—if English, watch against English faults. As an example of what is meant, take the words, ‘heavily,’ ‘hastily,’ ‘quickly,’ ‘solicit,’ ‘research.’ In the Scotch accent they would be thus : ‘*haivily*,’ ‘*haistily*,’ ‘*queekly*,’ ‘*soleecit*,’ ‘*resairch*.’ Some persons take pride in an Irish brogue or a Scotch accent, but everyone who aims at the highest standard of good speaking will school himself to get rid of every peculiarity.

NERVOUSNESS.

Modesty is an ornament in every speaker, but the timid, diffident speaker, whose nerves are so completely his master that he is afraid of his own voice, who is entirely void of self-possession, whose hands are glued to his side, and his body almost paralyzed, imparts to his audience some of the nervousness and misery which he is himself enduring. Whatever he attempts to say seems frozen on his lips. His arm never leaves his side, nor does his hand approach a natural gesture. I do not know which is to be more pitied—his audience or himself. Let every speaker determine that, by an indomitable effort of his will, he will at least control his nerves, and fight the battle which, by degrees, will make him master of himself. The easy, self-possessed speaker, on the contrary, imparts confidence to his hearers by his very manner. His natural utterance finds its immediate way to the sympathies of his audience. Persuasion dwells on the accent of his voice. He carries the eye, ear, and heart of his hearers with him. They are sorry when he has ceased to speak.

MANNERISM.

This is generally the result of bad teaching. Those who are conscious of their shortcomings betake themselves to some teacher of elocution, who is a mere quack. Macready warned me, when I was quite a young clergyman, against putting myself into the hands of any mere teacher of elocution, and it was the best word of advice he gave me, which I never fail to repeat to all who ask my advice. The result of such a course is usually a style of stilted, artificial, non-natural speaking and reading. The pupil does not speak or read, but declaims whatever he utters. But another form of mannerism is that fatal habit into which we clergy fall of having two voices, or, rather, two tones : one the natural, in which we speak like other people, to our friends, when we meet them : the other the non-natural, in which we preach to our fellow-men the most solemn and moving truths. So complete is the mannerism, that you would never suppose it was the same man whom you met in the parish on Saturday, who on Sunday gets into the desk or pulpit and speaks to you in what I call the 'clerical voice.' Oh ! if he could only drop this mechanical, unmeaning tone, and adopt that conversational style in which yesterday he told you that good story, when you met each other in the street, he would be once more himself. Simplicity holds as high a place in elocution as it does in every other art, and is the straight road to the heart.

APATHY.

This is a common fault among us English people. We speak or read as if we were getting through something that must be done, and were wholly indifferent as to the result. We may feel what we say, but we speak it as if we felt it not. Our own souls are not aroused by what we utter; and how can it be

expected that we should arouse or touch others ? Earnestness is the language of the heart, and the very condition of persuasion. It is a thing which you cannot mistake. It is the direct product of the soul, and nothing can take its place. If a man is in earnest, he must make others feel. It cannot be otherwise. The mere parrot-reader of the printed page strips truth of its reality, and leaves nothing but the sound of words, which die on the ear as quickly as they are uttered. How unlike the tones of the Apostle Paul, who, as he 'reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come,' caused Felix to tremble ! Yet, what was this but the electric influence of a speaker inspired by Divine truth ? The words of others may come from their lips—the words of Paul came from his heart.

SUMMARY.

I have touched on some of our faults :

Provincialisms,
Nervousness,
Mannerism,
Apathy.

Let me summarize them as—too rapid an utterance : indistinctness : a drawling, mincing, harsh, mouthing, artificial, monotonous, whining, pompous, sleepy, laboured, theatrical, affected style of speaking and reading.

Good speaking includes articulation, enunciation, correct pronunciation, pause, emphasis, punctuation, accent, rhythm, melody, pitch, intonation, cadence, modulation, expression, and feeling. The combination of all these makes the distinct, graceful, melodious, effective, persuasive speaker. The business of every speaker is to persuade, and to please is the first step towards persuading.

The many faults I have recited are only 'some of our faults.' It may be thought by my readers that I exaggerate. So let me, in conclusion, take, as an instance, the one little word *and*. This is pronounced in six different ways, only one of which is right. Some pronounce it (1) *an* or (2) *en*; others (3) *un*, (4) *'nd*, or (5) *'n*; and a few call it (6) *and*. Thus—'good-*an*'-bad,' 'cause-*en*-effect,' 'loaves-*en*-fishes,' 'hills-*un*-groves,' 'pen-*un*-ink,' 'you- *'nd*-I, or 'you *'n*-I, '*an*'-he said,' 'hook-*en*-eye,' 'wors-*en*-worse, 'cakes-*'n*-milk,' 'two-*'n*-three,' 'round-*'n*-round,' 'old-*'n*-young,' 'voice-*'n*-ear,' 'up-*'n*-down,' 'bread-*'n*-butter,' 'Jame-*zen*-John.'

These glaring faults are all clustered round the monosyllable *and*, by millions of speakers and readers, who would be angry if we said to them, 'You cannot yet pronounce the little word *and* in your mother-tongue !'

CHAPTER XIII.

MORE OF OUR FAULTS.

‘Everything you say should be said in the best possible way, so that no further consideration can improve it.’—

LORD BROUGHAM.

I HAVE become increasingly aware of the difficulty of explaining the intricacies of the subject on which I have undertaken to write. By oral lessons much more could be conveyed if my readers were my pupils. But I hope that, by thoughtful attention to what I have advanced, every intelligent student will be able to understand the force of the rules laid down, so as to make them practically available. Much of the art of good speaking is dependent on the art of good hearing, that is, the power of listening, and discriminating between the excellences or faults of other speakers, so that we should never hear a public speaker without discovering either something to be learned and imitated, or something to be detected and avoided. The skilful ear is always on the watch, in listening both to others and to one's self. One of the highest but most difficult goals to be attained is the

ART OF FORGETTING YOURSELF AND OTHERS.

If, while we speak, we are thinking only of notoriety and of winning the favourable opinion of others, we shall reach but the lowest place in the art of speaking. This art of forgetting

one's self and others is not incompatible with the most careful study and the most finished utterance. To forget others is far easier than to forget one's self. I consider it of the first importance to be able to forget others. It must embarrass a speaker if he is ever recollecting those before whom he is speaking. Madame Malibran, the great singer, though naturally nervous, entirely overcame her timidity. When asked by what means she had attained to this, she said : 'By regarding the concert-room as a garden, and the audience as so many heads of cabbage in it.' I do not say that this is by any means complimentary to our audience, but there is much truth in her answer. It implies that, if we would be self-possessed, if we would do justice to ourselves and our subject, then, by hook or by crook, we must train ourselves by the method of Madame Malibran or by some method of our own, to forget the presence of others.

But it is far more difficult to forget one's self. In this case, vanity, or humility, or mock humility, or extreme *mauvaise honte*, may come into play, and all these, or any one of them, will induce self-consciousness instead of self-forgetfulness. So great an achievement is it to

FORGET SELF

that it will suffice to 'cover a multitude of sins' in speaking. Raise but a barn under the shadow of a cathedral, and give us a man who shall preach truth in it with the reality, earnestness, and energy which such a soul-inspiring theme is able to awaken, rendering his own individuality subservient to the sacred truths he utters, and you shall see the barn crowded with warm hearts, while the matins and evensong of the cathedral. if the same truth be not preached there, shall be chanted as to the marble ears of the mighty dead. Why is this ? Because truth brings freedom of thought and freedom of speech : for where truth

leads, the mind follows. This is to realize those words of the Master : 'The truth shall make you free.' True eloquence disdains all artifice and trick. Affectation is one of the very worst of our faults. All mannerisms are to be avoided, for a bad manner will vitiate the best matter.

Would you be eloquent—that is, persuasive ? Be a man; not an ascetic, or a cynic, or a pedant—but a man, with the thoughts, interests, and sympathies of manhood, able to say with the poet :

'Homo sum : humani nihil a me alienum puto.'

True eloquence is not a parade, but an earnest business. A would-be eloquence, uttered only to be admired, is an impertinence to our hearers.

I am writing in this chapter of some more of our faults. None of us need be afraid of improvement. We shall need it to the day of our death. Let us always take it for granted that our style of speaking and reading is capable of considerable amendment.

A very common fault is committed in the reading of the little word *not*.

THE NEGATIVE.

It may be laid down as an inviolable rule, that the emphasis of the voice should always be laid on the negative, and never on the auxiliary verb which may accompany it. One of the earliest examples of the negative is to be found as far back as the twentieth chapter of Exodus, in which God gives to the world the moral law. A series of strong negatives is to be found in eight out of the Ten Commandments. How is the negative to be pronounced ? If we carefully think out the sense, we shall be incapable of mistake. Either, God permits

us to do a thing, or He does not permit us. He says to us, either 'you *shall* do a certain thing,' or 'you shall *not* do a certain thing.' Can there be any doubt in the mind that in these Commandments God forbids certain things to be done ? He says : 'You shall *not* make any graven image.' 'You shall *not* take My Name in vain.' 'You shall *not* kill.' 'You shall *not* steal' (and so forth).

Yet, what, I ask, is more common than to hear the whole force of the negative reversed in our churches ? Is it too much to say that eight out of ten clergy read the Commandments with a strong emphasis on the auxiliary verb '*shalt*' ? So that they are delivered thus :

'Thou *shalt* nōt make any graven mage.'

'Thou *shalt* nōt steal.'

'Thou *shalt* nōt bear false witness.'

'Thou *shalt* nōt covet.'

The auxiliary is lengthened and dragged out, and the negative is clipped and shortened; slurred over as if it was of no importance whatever. I have no hesitation in asserting that by such a delivery of the Commandments the whole sense of them is vitiated, and their entire force is lost. The only proper reading is the very reverse of the vicious delivery above quoted. There is only one mode of delivery which is right :

'Thou shalt [>]*not* make any graven mage.'

'Thou shalt [>]*not* steal.'

'Thou shalt [>]*not* bear false witness.'

'Thou shalt [>]*not* covet.'

If I can induce clergy to re-consider their delivery of the Ten Commandments; above all, if I can induce students never to fall into such a vicious mode of delivery, I shall not write this chapter in vain.

There is another splendid example of the negative in St. Paul's matchless sermon on Charity, in 1 Cor. xiii. Over and over again you may hear clergy read in verse 1, 'and *have* not charity'; in verse 2, 'and *have* nōt charity'; and again in verse 3, 'and *have* nōt charity,' laying all the stress of voice on the auxiliary verb 'have,' and clipping the 'not.' I will mark it as it ought to be read :

'Though I speak—with the tongues of men and of angels—and—have *nōt*—charity—I am become—as sounding brass or—a tinkling cymbal. And—though I have the gift—of prophecy; and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge—and—though I have all faith—so that I could remove mountains—and—have *nōt* charity—I am—nothing.

'And—though I bestow all my goods—to feed the poor—and—though I give my body to be burned—and—have *nōt* charity—it profiteth me—nothing.

'Charity—suffereth long, and is kind :

Charity—envieth not—

Vaunteth not itself—

Is nōt puffed up—

Doth nōt behave itself unseemly—

Seeketh nōt her own—

It nōt easily provoked—

Thinketh nō evil—

Rejoiceth—nōt in iniquity—

But—rejoiceth in the truth—

Beareth—all things—

Believeth—all things—

Hopeth—all things—

Endureth—all things.'

I know no finer instance of the use of the negative than is found in this sublime chapter, part of which I have marked for the reader. And if the student will master these two examples—the Ten Commandments and St. Paul's sermon on Charity—he has found for himself the whole secret of reading the negative wheresoever he may meet it.

Another prevalent fault in reading, and one to be ever avoided, is laying the emphasis on such small words as

ARE— WAS—WERE.

There is no book in the world which, even from a literary point of view, is so full of the examples we need as the Bible. Thus, in St. Matt. ii. 18, 'Rachel would not be comforted [concerning her children], because they are not.' You may hear this read again and again, 'because they *are* not.' But the sense at once leads us to the right reading—'because they are *not*'—that is, 'because they no longer live.'

So, in 1 Cor. i. 28 : 'Things that are not, to bring to nought things that are.' The first 'are' is unaccented, the second is accented. Thus : 'Things that are *not*, to bring to nought things that *are*.' Yet how often this is read : 'Things that *are* not, to bring to nought things that *are*.' The student will need great care to discriminate in these apparently small words. For instance, you may hear ninety-nine out of the hundred read the following passage utterly wrong : 'For Thy pleasure they are and were created' (Rev. iv. 11). The almost universal reading of this is : 'For Thy pleasure they *are* and *were* created.' Whereas the clear meaning teaches us to put the voice on the word 'created' only, and to make the words 'are' and 'were' only links to connect the passage. We shall see in our Bible that there is no comma at 'are,' so that it can be read correctly only in one way—thus : 'For Thy pleasure they *are—and were* created.'*

* *Id est*, 'for Thy pleasure they (now) exist, and were (originally) created.'

So, if we pass to the little word 'was,' what a legion of mistakes are made over it !

Take Gen. i. 3 : 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light,' Is not this almost always read : 'God said, Let there be light, and there *wās* light ?' But second thought will show the mind that it should be read thus : 'God said—Let there be light, and—there *wās* *light*.'

There is another strong instance of the frequent mistake of readers in putting the voice on the word 'was.'

Take the sublime words with which the Gospel of St. John opens. You will hear this constantly read thus : 'In the beginning *wās* the Word; and the Word *wās* with God, and the Word *wās* God. The same was *in* the beginning *with* God.' Whereas the only correct way to read it is thus : 'In the beginning—was the *Word*; and—the *Word*—was with *God*; and—the *Word* was *God*. The same—was *in* the beginning—with *God*.' This is one of the most difficult passages to read correctly and well; but it will amply repay the student to ponder over it, and to practise it till he can read it with its true emphasis, and at the same time with smoothness.

It would be difficult to enumerate the countless mistakes made in such prepositions as

IN—ON—UPON—WITH.

It seems scarcely necessary to point out to every thoughtful reader that, though each preposition must be distinctly heard, it should rarely be accented. There are, of course, 'exceptions to every rule,' as : 'He walked in the garden, not outside of it'; 'The moss grew on the stone, not under it'; 'He stood upon the rock, not beneath it'; 'The soldier fights with arms, not without them.' But here the adage comes to our help : 'The exception proves the rule.'

In all good reading the secret lies in the thought, not in the word. The mind interprets the thought, and then the lips and voice speak the word. The English language—spoken and read—is our own tongue, and deserves a far higher degree of study, care, and attention than is already bestowed on it. Whatever knowledge we acquire of other languages, should not every Englishman and Englishwoman be able to write, read, and speak our own language ? If any imagine they can do this whenever they please to try, they will find themselves vastly mistaken. The many offences which speakers and readers commit against our own language, demonstrate that it is a subject which requires long and careful study, and one which will repay years of application and labour.


CHAPTER XIV.

ON PATHOS.

‘Art, matured by habit, is akin to nature.’—

BEN JONSON.

CAN ‘pathos’ be defined ? or, is it only a sublimated feeling, to be expressed ? There are themes which no language can define. No man can define God. No artist that has lived could take a pencil and draw the most sublime face, and say, ‘That is God.’ No mathematician can draw a circle, and say, ‘All inside of that circle is God; all outside of it is not God.’ For God is everywhere. How poor a God must that be whom man could define ! He would be no larger than the measure of his thought, and that would be small indeed.

So there are human feelings which it is scarcely possible to define. We may illustrate them, but we cannot define them. I may not have travelled the world, or seen the springs that rise in the mountain, or the broadening rivers that roll into the ocean; but a single drop on the tongue will illustrate to my experience that I am tasting water. And in the heart there are feelings which no schoolman can define, and no language express. ‘Pathos’ has defined to be ‘a tear in the heart.’ It has also been called ‘a tear in the voice.’ And perhaps this latter is as good a definition as can be reached. The only way in which a ‘tear in the voice’ can be rendered is by the tremor () of the voice, as opposed to smooth and regular speaking.

Undoubtedly, there is no book which gives such scope for 'pathos' as the Bible. Take one of the early passages in it, Gen. xxvii. 32-38, where, after Jacob has obtained, by an act of deception, the blessing from Isaac, his elder brother Esau came to his father's bedside.

'And Isaac his father said unto him, Who art thou ? And he said, I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau.'

'And Isaac trembled very exceedingly, and said, Who ? Where is he that hath taken venison, and brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him ? Yea, and he shall be blessed.

'And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceeding bitter cry, and said unto his father, Bless me, even me also, O my father.'

The climax of pathos follows, when (in the thirty-eighth verse)

'Esau said unto his father, Hast thou but one blessing, my father ? bless me, even me also, O my father. And Esau lifted up his voice, and wept.'

Take another passage, on the death of Absalom, when his father, David, broke into what the poet calls

'The resistless eloquence of grief.'

This is in 2 Sam. xviii. 31-33 :

'And Cushai said, Tidings, my lord the king; for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee.

'And the king said unto Cushai, Is the young man Absalom safe ?

'And Cushai answered, The enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is.

‘And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom. Would God I had died for thee—O—Absalom—my son—my son !’

Both these passages are highly dramatic.

Take an instance of pensive ‘pathos’ in Psalm cxxxvii. :

‘By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion.

‘We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.

‘For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

‘How shall we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land ?

‘If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.’

If space allowed, we might give many fine passages from the prophets. Dr. South says, in one of his sermons :

‘Where did we ever find sorrow flowing forth in such a prevailing “pathos” as in the Lamentations of Jeremiah ?’

Yes, in the prophecy of Jeremiah there occurs a sublime instance of ‘pathos.’ In chapter viii., verse 21 :

‘For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me.

‘Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there ? why, then, is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered ? Oh, that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people !’

Dr. Sough is quite right in his delineation of the Lamentations of Jeremiah. I recommend any student to make them a study for 'pathos.' Take, as a short example, the Lamentations, chapter v.

'Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach.

'Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses to aliens.

'We are orphans and fatherless; our mothers are as widows.

'The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning.

'The crown is fallen from our head; woe unto us, that we have sinned.

'For this—our heart is faint; for these things—our eyes are dim.'

The following passage is taken from a very dramatic part of 'Paradise Lost' (B. X., l. 914); and if read aright, these plaintive words of Eve call for the colouring of the tremulous voice :

'Forsake me not thus, Adam ! witness, Heaven,
What love sincere, and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived ! Thy suppliant—
I beg, and clasp thy knees : bereave me not,
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist ?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour, perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace : both joining,
As joined in injuries, one enmity
Against a foe by doom express assigned us.

That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not
Thine anger for this misery befallen;
On me already lost, me than myself
More miserable ! Both have sinned, but thou
Against God only : I, against God and thee;
And to the place of judgment will return :
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe :
Me, me only, just object of His ire.'

Milton, after this magnificent passage, tells us of Eve,
that

'She ended—weeping—
With tears that ceased not flowing.'

Now, it is clear that this does not intend the reader to shed tears. When our speech would convey 'tears,' it must always be with more or less tremor of the voice—not during the whole passage, for the effect would be monotonous, and every reader must avoid monotony. Some of the words which carry the deepest feelings have not sufficient quantity to allow the intonation of the tremor. The word '*beg*' is too limited for the extension of the voice. But the words '*uttermost*,' '*bereave*,' '*only*,' '*forlorn*,' and '*more*' give ample scope for the intonation of the voice.

I remember, many years ago, when I was a guest at Sherborne House, the charming country home of Macready, I asked him which he considered the most pathetic passage he had ever read. He took down a volume of Sterne from the shelf in his study and read to me—as only he could read it—the closing passage of the 'Story of Le Fevre' :

'The blood and spirits of Le Fevre, which were waxing cold—and—slow within him—were retreating to their last citadel—the heart—rallied back—the film forsook his eyes for a moment—he looked up wishfully in my Uncle Toby's

face, —then—cast a look upon his boy—and that ligament—fine as it was—was never broken.

‘Nature instantly ebbed again—the film returned to its place, —the pulse fluttered—stopped—went on—throbbed—stopped again—moved—stopped. Shall I go on? —No.’

These varied examples open up to the student a wide field of thought. Another word for ‘pathos’ is

FEELING,

and on this really depends far more than any words on this subject can express. The *verve* or *tremor* of the voice is not an artificial trick. If it were so, it is the mere artifice of the actor, which is to be condemned and avoided as unreal. But it should be the outcome of real feeling. Plato calls the passions ‘the wings of the soul.’ In another place styles them ‘the chariot-horses of the soul,’ by which is implied that, however fleet or strong, they must be always under control.

Feeling is the great spring and mover of the soul. It is an unwritten language which letters cannot shape, which sounds cannot convey, which comes from the heart and speaks to the heart. When, therefore, I attempt to write on ‘pathos,’ I have no set rules to offer, no artificial modes to suggest, no theatrical tricks even to tolerate. The simplest and best advice I can give is this :

FEEL ALL YOU READ.

He who, when he reads before others, is occupied with the thought of what their opinion will be of his reading, may read after a fashion, but will never read well. He alone who

feels will read as if he felt, and will communicate his own feelings to his hearers.

How often, owing to an entire absence of feeling, is the most striking and pathetic language read in a cold and unanimated manner. I have heard a clergyman read the tenth chapter of Joshua in church. It contains the story of the conquest of the five kings who rose against Israel. This striking piece of Scripture history was read in a manner so cold and expressionless that it was calculated to put us to sleep. I have never forgotten his manner in reading the twenty-second verse, in which the captain, Joshua, gives a command to bring out the captive kings to death. 'Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings to me out of the cave.' This he muttered with as little point or feeling as if he were saying to his servant, 'Open my chamber door, and bring me my slippers.'

In the case of this reader of Holy Scripture (it would equally apply to the reading of any author), language was composed of words only : and the words were uttered as if the mind of the reader was a hundred miles away; there was no feeling whatever. It is clear to every thoughtful mind that language is more than mere words uttered off the lips. Words may be cold and lifeless as marble; language is warm and living. They are grossly mistaken who think that nothing is essentially necessary to language but words.

There are two kinds of language necessary to all who wish to reach the end of public speaking. The one is the language of ideas, by which thoughts pass from one mind to another through the medium of words.

The other is the language of feeling, by which emotions and passions are made known to others, through the medium of the voice in all its varied tones. The great object of every

public speaker should be to move others, and for this he must employ the language of feeling—not that of ideas only, which of itself may have no power of moving. He who contents himself with the mere utterance of words is not to be classed at all among public speakers. Even animals have a language. When a dog barks, other dogs near will do the same; when a horse neighs, some neighbouring horse will do the same : when one of the cattle lows, the rest will lift their heads and do the same.

How much more should man—who alone wields Divine language, being God's gift to mankind—exercise his magnificent powers ! They who feel, and are moved, will love their form of worship, through which they draw nigh to God; but they whose hearts and feelings are never touched will simply attend our churches as a matter of custom or duty.

CHAPTER XV.

ON EXPRESSION.

‘If a man study any language, let it be that of his own country.’—
LOCKE.

EXPRESSION in reading and speaking has been defined to be ‘word-painting.’ And certainly there are some men—very few—who, like the late W. Morley Punshon, can throw more into a single word than others of us can import into a whole page. Who that ever heard Morley Punshon recite Macaulay’s ‘Lay of Horatius,’ is likely to forget his ‘word-painting’? As, for instance, in that stanza in which the bridge falls :

‘But with a crash | like thunder—
Fell | every loosened beam;
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream :
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed | the yellow foam.’

It is not too much to say that, as Morley Punshon recited that stanza, you (mentally) saw the bridge fall, you (mentally) heard the ‘crash,’ and you (mentally) beheld the ‘yellow foam’ ‘splashed’ to the ‘highest turret-tops.’ This is only another

way of saying that it was realistic in a high degree. He threw the very sound into a word. But how came he to possess this coveted power of 'word-painting' ? Someone may answer, 'By genius : ' I prefer to answer, 'By study.' He had studied this scene till it became a picture in his own mind. He saw it in the way in which the great chess-player, Morphy—when he played twelve games simultaneously, without seeing the board—peopled each board with all its pieces, and saw each piece as if he was looking at the board. But can we ordinary readers and speakers attain to this ? Yes, in our measure, by the same process—'by study.' In the first place, learn by heart what you wish to express; learn it perfectly, so that you are quite independent of your book, and are left free to the guidance and promptings of your own mind. Then, when you have memorized the words, close your eyes, and infix the thoughts and feelings of the author in the mind in such a way that there shall be an entire reproduction of them. This will not make you artificial, but natural. The effort will become almost involuntary, as was the case when little Jim whistled in a ragged school; his teacher corrected him, but the lad exclaimed : 'Please, sir, it wasn't me as whistled; it whistled itself.'

In good reading and speaking there are two great requisites, force and grace; the one has its foundation chiefly in nature, the other in art. Nature can do much without art, art but little without nature : united they support each other. If nature unassisted could form eminent readers and speakers, where were the use of art or culture, which, however, no one attempts to despise. Look at the artist. What years of culture have to be added to the gift for painting ! Look at the musician. What years of practice have to be undergone before he can stand before the public ! The best art is but nature improved. Yet, of all prejudices in this country, there is one most difficult

to remove; I mean the opinion which prevails that we have no need to study our native language, because sufficient knowledge of it will come to every Englishman as a matter of course; though it will be generally admitted that the people who understand and speak English well are exceedingly few in number.

It is strange that, though some of the ablest minds who were competent judges, such as Milton, Dryden, Locke, and Addison, pointed out our defects, we have not yet corrected them. Remember, however, that books, rules, teachers, and all of them combined, cannot make a reader or speaker of you, unless you throw your whole mind into your subject. It is no part of my effort, in this book, to create artificial readers.

If my system, as I attempt to enunciate it, is not founded in nature, discard it entirely. Form your own opinion of a passage, and do not allow another to judge for you. Your most intimate friend has not half the power of discriminating that you yourself possess.

Cultivate independence and self-reliance in reading and speaking, as in all else. You must will that it shall be done. Sheridan, of whose oratorical powers few have not heard, after exciting great hopes among his friends as to his future prospects, made a signal failure on his first appearance in Parliament—so much so that some of his friends urged him never to make another attempt. He replied, 'I will; for I feel it is in me, and it shall come out.' He did try, and his efforts were crowned with success. In like manner, almost every orator, from Demosthenes and Cicero down to Benjamin D'Israeli, failed at first, but perseverance won the day.

Whether, then, we define expression in reading and speaking to be 'word-painting,' or to be 'feeling what we utter,' by dwelling on the ideas which we have infixed on the mind,

it is clear that it is the power of conveying to others, by the intonation of voice, what we ourselves first feel in the mind. So when we speak of 'expression in music,' do we not mean 'feeling'? In all kinds of sentences, paragraphs, and speeches, there are what may be called strong points, which are to be brought out by the voice; and expression is the power of throwing all weak parts into the background, and bringing the strong ones into the foreground. If the words in a passage which are insignificant are in delivery made significant, the expression will be destroyed. But to bring out the strong points in a passage by the music, magic, and witchery of the voice, while at the same time the smallest word in the sentence has its value, and is distinctly heard—this is 'expression.' They who are

'Coldly correct, and critically dull.'

will never reach the heart, though they may please the ear.

There is a prominent feature in the art of reading which seems really to form part of what is included in the word 'expression.' I mean the power of transition by a good reader, the power of passing not only from one paragraph to another, but from one character into another by a notable change of voice. When any new character is introduced, or any new sentiment is brought on the page by the author, it must be clearly defined by the reader; and when we are under the spell of a good reader we can perceive, without seeing the page, that he is entering on a new subject or passing into a new character. Unless we study and acquire this power of transition from one character or idea to another, we shall lapse into mere monotonous pronouncers of words, and our reading will be void of all 'expression.' This art is produced in the following ways :

First, by the sentence which precedes the change being marked by that falling cadence of the voice which brings the

sense to a complete close. This prepares the mind and ear for the introduction of the new paragraph. Secondly, by a pause, considerably longer than that which is observed between sentences which are nearly related to each other. Thirdly, by beginning to speak the new paragraph and to introduce the new character to your hearers in a pitch or tone of voice one note higher than was given to the previous sentence. Fourthly, always remember to bring your voice back to the same tone when you return to each character that you have to portray, so as to preserve, as far as one voice can do it, the identity of such character. This is a study which will require very considerable practice and constant recollection. Without it there will be no 'light and shade' in our reading, and no variety of 'expression' in the voice; but it is one of the most difficult fields of study and observation in the art of reading. It is rendered the more so because on the stage each character is differently personated. If there be ten characters, there are ten persons to act them; and as each speaks, you see a new face and hear a new voice wholly differing from the previous one. This gives the actor an incalculable advantage over the reader; and it is the actor's fault if, after having thoroughly learned and studied his character and made it a part of his own mind, he does not succeed.

The disadvantage on the side of the reader, as beside the actor, is that, no matter what facial power or variety of voice he can import into the page, he has only one face and one voice with which to present to his hearers all the characters or ideas of the author. It is the fashion to say that our English language is not one adapted to oratory. It is true the Italian may be more fitted for music. The Greek language is softer. But I doubt whether for oratory and poetry there is any tongue, ancient or modern, capable of such expression as the English,

nor any more copious. And if it is said that there are some hard sounds and some unliquid syllables in it, what shall we say of the compendious but severe Latin tongue itself, in which we find such harsh sounds as ‘tot,’ ‘quot,’ ‘est,’ ‘ut,’ ‘nec,’ ‘sit,’ ‘sunt,’ ‘dat,’ ‘dabat,’ ‘hic,’ ‘hæc,’ ‘hoc,’ ‘duc,’ ‘fac,’ ‘dic,’ and many others ? Until a poet comes into the world endowed with twice the genius of a Shakespeare or Milton, who shall find our language break in his hands as too feeble a tool to carry his thoughts, we must feel that our English tongue is far mightier than anything that has ever been written in it. A book, however great it may be, embodies but the product of a single mind, but a language is the heritage of a nation. And we inherit in our English tongue a possession which will outstrip the greatest genius that may ever be born, even if he were an Hercules in intellect.

Few of us are destined to be writers (though there are legions of scribblers), but all of us are speakers. Hence the paramount importance of bestowing far more time and labour on learning how to speak than Englishmen have yet done. The best reading is nothing but speaking as if expressing one’s own sentiments, and not those of another mind. And no one can read well till he speaks the thoughts of his author in the same natural manner as he speaks his own thoughts. How few of us read to think ! The majority of us treat books as some men do lords. They just know their titles, and then boast of their acquaintance with them. When we understand and think, we shall all read our own language well. True reading is true ‘expression.’

CHAPTER XVI.

CAN ELOCUTION BE TAUGHT ?

‘A language cannot be learned without habits of close application.’—
HAMERTON.

CERTAINLY the *worst* elocution can be taught; so why not the better way towards excellence ? If I had a voice to reach all students, I should warn them, with all my might, against placing themselves under a certain class of quacks and charlatans, who advertise that they understand ‘voice production,’ and that they teach clergy and members of Parliament how to speak. In most cases they utterly spoil the student. They rob him of the ‘natural,’ which is born with him, and remains with him until it is supplanted by bad art. Look at a knot of little children at play. Every word spoken in their mimic game is natural; every gesture of the little hand, every wave of the little arm, every stamp of the little foot, is natural; every movement of the body is gracefulness. Who could believe that in a few years there should emerge from their ranks the awkward member of Parliament, interlarding his speech with ‘e-hems’ innumerable; the clergyman who murders our matchless Liturgy, and knows not what to do with his hands in the pulpit; and even the actor, who speaks the great soliloquies of Hamlet into his boots ! What has destroyed nature in these former children ? Simply the worst

of teaching. In their English home, when quite young, they have been left very much to servants, and it may take years to eradicate the bad faults they contract. This is why you hear an Englishman say, 'I sawr our Queen Victorier from the winder of a 'ouse.' In the same home of their childhood their parents clip their words, and visitors who call do the same. The child-speaker therefore deteriorates into the boy-speaker or girl-speaker. Then it is found necessary to send the future member of Parliament, the future Archbishop, the future Judge, to school. Here, not one master in fifty can read or speak his own Saxon tongue, and the boy's schoolfellows have had, with few exceptions, the same bad teaching as he got in his English home—he is surrounded by the most faulty speaking. I well remember, at the age of ten, going to my first large school, before I went to a public school, and, in listening to my schoolfellows speaking to each other, I singled out one—only one—out of more than a hundred boys, who spoke beautifully. His silver voice and perfect intonation enchained me. It was music to listen to his voice. I resolved to try and speak like him. He and I became fast friends. We played together, walked together, talked together, worked together—for we were in the same class. I first learned the music of language from his lips, in the melody of his voice and the finished articulation of his every word. Poor young Laurie !—his name—died before I left for a public school.

'Whom the gods love—die young.'

But even at that tender age, in the now far-off 'long ago,' he was to me, for the 'golden days' we loved each other, something of what Arthur Hallam was to Tennyson, of whom he wrote :

'A hand that can be clasp'd no more.'*

* 'In Memoriam.'

The vision of my young schoolfellow has never faded out of my life, and only when we shall meet again, and I shall look into his lustrous eyes and once more listen to the music of his soft voice, shall he know how much I owed to him. His was one of those human voices so exquisitely described by Tom Moore :

‘For mine is the music that lightly floats,
And mine are the murmuring, dying notes—
That fall as soft as snow on the sea,
And *melt* in the heart as instantly :
And the passionate strain that deeply going,
Refines the bosom it trembles through;
As the musk-wind over the waters blowing,
Ruffles the wave, but—sweetens it too.’

How many of us go through our life and work under the same high and holy spell which, by the memories of Arthur Hallam, moulded Tennyson !

‘We see a face you cannot see,
And hear a voice you cannot hear.’

But it is only in heaven we shall find again what we lose here—that heaven of which one of the most eloquent preachers of this century said, ‘Eye hath not gazed on its beauty, ear hath not drank in its minstrelsy, heart hath not throbbed to its joys.’*

While the boy is at school he is taught Greek and Latin for the imagination and memory; mathematics for the mind; perhaps the modern languages, if there is room; but it is ‘passing strange’ that no time in his school-life can be found to teach him the only language in which he can ever hope to excel at the Bar, in the Church, in Parliament, or as an English gentleman. At the conference of the head-masters of our public

* Henry Melvill.

schools, some little time ago, I was rejoiced to read the courageous words of the Head-master of Harrow,* when he advocated the study of our mother-tongue. I have reason to know that not a few English parents rejoiced at his words. There are some teachers who own the truth of what I am here earnestly pleading, who have made some advance towards the study of the English language, who perhaps are ready to say :

‘I hope we have reformed this indifferently.’

I am afraid I ask for more, and say with Hamlet :

‘O, reform it altogether.’

Once let our public schools adopt the thorough study of our own tongue, and assert that there is no complete education without it, then all other schools will perforce follow, and the reflex influence on English homes will soon be felt; while it will then become the exception, instead of the rule, that a man shall enter any one of our professions, or stand on the floor of the House of Commons, or speak to his tenants as an English gentleman, without being able to deserve and command the attention of his audience.

Our question, then, is :

CAN ELOCUTION BE TAUGHT ?

The sceptics on this subject appear under three classes : The first are those who see nothing to be learned, except alphabetic sounds. They think that ‘everyone can read,’ especially themselves. They are ignorant of the first elements of their own language. They are a hopeless class, as they are quite self-satisfied. The second class are those who think that

* Rev. J. E. C. Weldon.

the accomplishment of good speaking and reading is the result of genius, and that the happy possessor of it is one of Nature's rare productions. Hence they think that it is purely a gift, not an acquirement. But this is not so. They who have reached any excellence in art know well that they are distinguished from the thousands who surround them by their industry and singleness of purpose; nor do they ever withhold from others the knowledge which they possess, since their one desire and aim is to set before themselves and others the highest standard of excellence, though none of us can reach it in a lifetime.

The third class are those who hold that the art of reading and speaking can be best taught, and only taught, by imitation. In other words, that we learn like children, who imitate all they listen to, and copy their elders in all their faults more than in their excellences. But although it is quite true that good speaking and reading are largely acquired by following the best models we can hear, it must never be forgotten that every one of us must learn, on systematic and communicable principles, the uses of the voice, of the tongue, of the teeth, and of the lips, which are Nature's grand but simple instruments for the production of all language. I will go so far as to say that I consider elocution to be a science which, like all knowledge, reveals itself only to the patient and devoted student. The art of reading well is one of those accomplishments which all wish to possess, many think they have already, and but few set themselves to acquire. It is a great mistake to suppose that after a few lessons from someone who professes to teach, and no toil of our own, we can at once make ourselves masters of the art. I have sought in this book to point out that excellence in our own language is not an endowment showered on any of us, but the product of hard and unremitting industry. In all other languages, we must work

to acquire them; why should we think that our own language is an exception, and that because we are born Englishmen we are the inheritors of English ? Visit some, may I not say, all our Universities, and observe how the art of speaking is—not taught. Then enter a conservatoire of music. Observe there the masterly discipline, the unwearied practice, and incessant toil, to produce the voice, or to excel as instrumentalists; and afterwards do not be surprised that Parliament, the Bar, the Pulpit, the professorial chairs of our Universities, are filled with drawlers, mumblers, mouthers, and mongers of monotony; nor, on the other hand, that our schools of music are constantly sending forth vocal wonders and instrumental prodigies, who give their wealth of pleasure to prince and peasant. In the one—the University—the art of speaking is utterly neglected; in the other—the conservatoire—the art of music is conscientiously taught and unremittingly studied.

It may be asked, Why do you object to learning by imitation ? Because many of our faults arise from it, and from being taught by imitation only. So long as there has been a history of the stage, actors have been classes as belonging to the school of some predecessor or contemporary, such as the schools of Garrick, the Kembles, Edmund Kean, Macready, and Mrs. Siddons, who was called ‘the mistress of the voice.’ And inasmuch as there is always one who, by chance or merit, is the leading spirit of the day, it generally happens that his faults are to be recognised in a crowd of pupils and imitators. They miss his best excellences, and take up his sinful elocution. We do not want to see readers and speakers all of one school, but for the want of any school, there is not yet established any standard to which we may point. Hence, reputed ‘good readers’ are frequently positively bad. It is a sad thing to say, but true, that when we go to hear some speakers in Parliament, at the

Bar, or in the Pulpit, it is to detect their faults rather than listen to their excellences. In no profession is this more true, I fear, than in my own. You may hear our matchless Litany gabbled in many of our churches, and the most fervent appeals from the pulpit uttered with the same matter-of fact monotone as would be appropriate to the manner of repeating the multiplication-table. I marvel at the patience of the laity, who, with their families, have to listen to the most vicious styles of speaking in our churches.

When our homes and public schools make our own beautiful Saxon tongue an indispensable part of English education—but not till then—all this will be corrected. It must be as possible to teach men to speak their own language as to teach them other things outside of it, and every condition of English life requires our own language before all others. I do not say that instruction can create the powers of a speaker, but I know it can direct and improve them. ‘Passion,’ says a writer, ‘knows more than art.’ It may know more than art, but art sometimes knows better than passion, for it tempers and controls by good taste and discrimination. Science, as we regard it, can do not more than lay down, for the study of every art, those rules which observation and experience have taught us.

Meanwhile, till a stronger consensus of opinion shall demand that our mother-tongue shall have its rightful place in the curriculum of education, we can all do our best—something towards correcting our own faults and improving our style. The mind must furnish the motive, the ear must watch for the opportunity, and by industry we must cultivate ourselves. Every one of us can improve himself by industry. We ‘live to learn.’ In vain shall the mind furnish the nicest discrimination or the ear be ready and susceptible to learn, if the tongue do not lend

the perseverance of its practice. It was a happy side of the curse that the taste can be gratified only by the 'sweat of the brow.' The ear, too, can receive its full measure of delight only through the long practice and steady labour of the voice. 'Nothing is given to mortals without indefatigable labour.'

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PLATFORM.

‘Eloquence must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion.’—

WEBSTER.

WE have arrived at an age which may be called the Era of Benevolence. Religious and philanthropic societies of all kinds have been formed, and the platform has been during the present century one of the principal means of promoting these manifold objects. This is the age of congresses and conferences on every side. The pulpit has always been, and still is, the throne of the preacher; for wherever a man is found who has anything good to say, and knows how to say it, he is sure to have attentive listeners.

‘There stands the messenger of truth ! there stands
The legate of the skies ! his theme divine :
His office sacred, his credentials clear;
By him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the gospel whispers peace.’*

I have no intention to raise the platform to an equality with the pulpit. For the pulpit we must all cherish profound veneration; but without in the least degree derogating from its

* Cowper.

honour, there are some points of view in which, for the cultivation of a speaker, the platform has an advantage.

In the pulpit there is one speaker, on the platform there are many. God divides His gifts among men. No one man excels in everything, though there are few who do not prove themselves equal to something. No one man, therefore, can possess the same wisdom as many. 'In the multitude of counsellors there is wisdom.' The platform collects the scattered rays of thought and eloquence, and pours their united force upon the matter to be discussed. A succession of different speakers, who bring different minds and different voices to bear upon the same subject, gives variety and lessens the risk of monotony in listening to a single speaker, as in the pulpit. Indeed, there can be no better school for the acquisition of good speaking than the platform, where not only clergy, but statesmen, philanthropists, men of all ranks and all classes, unite as earnest advocates of some good cause. In the pulpit the speaker is sectarian. I use the word 'sectarian' in no theological spirit. I would not myself give a straw for a man who does not belong to that sect or creed which he conscientiously believes to be the truest and best. In the pulpit it is the distinct duty of a preacher to contend for that doctrine and discipline which he has honestly adopted, and which are held by that body with which his judgment has led him to associate. But on the platform points of difference, though not renounced, are not brought forward. One spirit pervades the assembly—our differences are forgotten for the time in our agreement. The pulpit, if it be honest, may bear the complexion of party; but on the platform shades of difference are merged in the interests of the object which calls us together. By friction with one another we 'lose the horns and hoofs';

the sharp corners which we all have, are rounded off, our prejudices are melted and our bigotry is softened.

There is another point of difference and advantage in the platform—that the audience express their approval or disapproval. In the earlier centuries public assemblies expressed their approbation by loud applause at the instructions of the pulpit. This custom is very properly laid aside; it is utterly out of place. On the platform, however, it may be indulged with advantage. It keeps attention alive; it prevents weariness; it stimulates and encourages the speakers, and it may be regarded as a very fair criterion of public taste. The presence of an audience is somewhat different from that of a congregation in church. Before an audience a platform speaker may be able, in the warmth of the moment, to express himself in a more free, and even familiar, way than the dignity of the pulpit would allow. There may be on the platform more power to forget self, more unconstrained feeling, more sympathy between the speaker and his hearers, a more direct chain from his heart to theirs than in delivering the solemn message of the pulpit. He may have courage and boldness to utter from the one what he would feel reluctant and timid to say from the other. He will probably be more warm and less tame, and will feel ‘more at home,’ which is one of the first things to help him to do justice to his subject and to himself.

There can be no doubt that the platform is a grand school for the improvement of eloquence. A knowledge of the art of speaking in public is one of those acquisitions needed by almost every Englishman, and at every turn of his life among his fellows. There are few whom we more pity than the man who is suddenly called ‘on his legs,’ but who has nothing to say, or perhaps, if we knew his mind, has really much to say, but knows not how to say it, and who has to content himself by

saying, 'I beg to second the resolution,' and even then sits down covered with confusion. To correct this deplorable state of things, debating societies for young men are admirable preparatory schools. The art of speaking, like that of swimming, can be acquired only by the endeavour to do it.

After this previous training it is by no means so appalling a thing to make a speech from the platform. I strongly recommend young men to form debating societies, or, where already formed, to join one, and to plunge into the debate with courage. Better say a thing clumsily than be silent. The man who is called on to make a speech, more or less extemporaneous, must expect at first to be mortified by ill-success, perhaps by conscious failure. When the moment for speaking arrives, he may find his mind slow, his thought sluggish, his tongue almost glued to the roof of his mouth; but, still, I advise him to make the venture, and he will soon be rewarded, especially if the mind be well trained and stored and disciplined. Prepare the thoughts carefully, and, as a rule, the words will come. Nothing must take the place of thoughtful preparation. It should be a conscientious rule never to offer that 'which costs us nothing.'

Thought is the best preparation; after this the language will come at the moment. The power of expressing our thoughts depends, in a great measure, on habit and practice, and one of the many advantages of what we call extemporaneous speaking is that it trains us to think quickly and speak promptly. It is possible to overdo mental preparation. Many orators have spoken, at the moment, more brilliant things than they ever prepared. The same thing is true of music. It has been said that Bach and Handel played better extempore music than they could write with meditation. Sir Walter Scott said that 'the passages in which he best succeeded had uniformly been

written with the greatest rapidity.' Cicero said that the instances in which he was most successful were those in which he most entirely abandoned himself to the impulses of his feelings. Every speaker's experience will bear testimony to the same thing; and thus the saying of Goldsmith proves true, that 'to feel one's subject thoroughly, and to speak without fear, are two of the best rules of eloquence.'

There can be no doubt that the platform has done much to improve the art of speaking. Were it possible to reproduce all the brilliant, soul-stirring speeches that have been made from the platform, which were spoken but never taken down, they would form almost a library of eloquence worthy to be laid on the altar of literature. Indeed, the pulpit has been improved by the platform. It has helped the clergy to overcome that apathy for which we are distinguished in the pulpit, and to breathe something of the life and soul of genuine eloquence into our delivery. For if any man would do his best, it can only be on topics in which he is intensely interested. In the great deliberative assembly of Parliament, it is when questions of interest absorb and agitate the mind that they call forth bursts of eloquence by which men are remembered as powerful orators. And, indeed, we hear it in conversation, where everyone can be eloquent on his favourite subject.

If I were asked what hints I would give to one desirous of cultivating platform speaking, I would say : Firstly, Never make apologies. We can rarely attend platform meetings without hearing several apologies. One of the most common is the want of ability, no doubt a very satisfactory one. But why not let the hearers themselves discover this ? Speakers often inform the audience that they had no idea of speaking when they entered that room. This may be true, and if it is so, it is surely no such wondrous feat to deliver a short speech

without previous meditation. Barristers have to acquire the power to do this. But of all men the excuse comes with the worst grace from the clergy, men who for years have been accustomed to address the public two or three times a week. What is more astonishing than that they should think it necessary to make an apology when called upon to speak for five or ten minutes without previous notice, and that upon some topic closely connected with their sacred calling ? These apologies have been called the 'cant of the platform.' All our apologies spring from pride. In plain English they amount to this : 'Let me beg of you not to take my present address as any criterion of my abilities. I assure you I am a much wiser and much cleverer man than you would suspect me to be were you to judge of my talents by the speech I am about to delivery.'

Secondly, Do not read extracts from books or letters. If a speaker desires to bore his hearers he cannot possibly devise a more certain way than this. Reading from the pulpit is irksome, but from the platform it is insufferable. It is far preferable, if you have a letter of interest, to hold the letter in your hand, and tell the audience the substance of it in your own language. This will interest them; the other plan will weary them. On no occasion should a long letter or statement be read. It would assuredly become tiresome, and the only pleasure it will afford your hearers will be felt at its conclusion.

Thirdly, Do not adopt a preachey style of speaking on the platform. A speech is quite different from a sermon. A sermon may be read; a speech should never be read, but always spoken. Many of us think that a sermon should also be spoken, not read—

'What is a sermon, good or bad,
If a man reads it like a lad ?'

At the same time, where would much of the theology of the Church have been, if men like Jeremy Taylor, South, and others, had not carefully written their sermons, which are now the heritage of the Church ?

In a sermon it may be requisite to state your divisions, or, at least, to announce the topics to be discussed and the order in which they shall be treated. But this would be fatal to a speech. Every public address should be adapted to promote the end in view. Some who have written on the art of preaching have stated that the sermon should be so interwoven with the text in its construction that the same sermon could not be preached from any other text. This was eminently the case with that prince of preachers, Henry Melvill, who almost invariably closed each division or period of his subject by introducing the text on which he based his sermon. A similar rule may be applied to the platform. A speech ought to be so closely adapted to the cause in favour of which it is spoken that it could not be delivered on behalf of any other.

The manner of discussing a subject on the platform also requires close attention. We should appeal to the imagination and feelings rather than to the intellect. Close and protracted reasonings, however suitable in the pulpit, produce but little effect on the platform. Noble and manly sentiments, a telling anecdote, pictorial allusions, and a dash of humour are all elements of success on the platform; and we must never forget that, as in the pulpit, manner is almost as important as matter.

Finally, do not speak at length. He who makes a long speech must infringe on the time of other speakers. For this reason a time-table is often adopted, allotting to each speaker his given time. I remember on one occasion, some years ago, a meeting at Exeter Hall, in which twenty minutes was allotted to each speaker. One speaker, who happened to be of small

stature, spoke half an hour. When he sat down a tall Scotchman rose, and said : 'Ten minutes of that speech was mine. I came all the way from Aberdeen for that twenty minutes, and half of it has been stolen; but I see it is wi' you in England as it is wi' us in Scotland, the smaller the man, the longer the speech,' My readers will probably think that the little man laid himself open to this sarcasm from the tall man.

It is an error to suppose that long speeches denote either strength or fertility of intellect. It is easier to attenuate a subject into a speech of an hour long than to compress it into a quarter of an hour. Queen Anne once said to one of her chaplains, 'I wish you had had time to make your sermon longer.' 'Please, your Majesty,' he replied, 'I wish I had had time to make it shorter.' We must never be tempted to imagine that quantity can atone for quality. Many years ago, the old Duke of Wellington (of whom it was said that he fought more than forty battles, and never lost one) appointed Henry Melvill to be chaplain to the Tower of London, and he sent Melvill a message that he wished to see him. During the short interview, Melvill said : 'I have preached to thousands of people, but never to soldiers : I shall be grateful for any hints your Grace may give me.' The Duke made one of his laconic replies—one worth being remembered by all preachers in the pulpit and speakers on the platform—'*Be brief—and to the purpose.*'

CHAPTER XVIII.

GESTURE.

‘Suit the action to the word—the word to the action.’

SHAKESPERE.

ARE we to consider gesture a part of the subject on which I am attempting to write ? Some may think it quite out of place, and say that it is unworthy of anyone in earnest to study or practise gesture : that it makes him stilted, artificial, and unnatural. Yet we may affirm, with all reverence, that gesture is found frequently in the Bible. We find God saying to Moses, ‘Stretch out thy hand over the sea; and Moses stretched out his hand over the sea.’* So, in like manner, ‘Peter beckoning with his hand.’† And when, in the Jewish synagogue in Antioch, the rulers sent to Paul and Barnabas, saying, ‘Men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on; then Paul stood up, and, beckoning with his hand, said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.’‡ It is the custom of mothers to teach their children to clasp their little hands in prayer; and Sir Joshua Reynolds availed himself of this idea in his beautiful picture of the infant Samuel. Undoubtedly, the business of every speaker and reader is to keep himself out of sight, and to let nothing appear but his characters. He must altogether lose himself in his subject. But

* Exod. xiv. 16.

† Acts xii. 17.

‡ Acts xiii. 15, 16.

while this is true, and we cannot too earnestly carry it out, it is equally true that

‘Action is eloquence, and the eyes of listeners
As learned as their ears.’

Language is addressed to the mind through the ear, by means of words and tones. But Nature has not restricted communication to one sense only. In other words, she has made herself visible to the eye, as well as audible to the ear. As she lends tones to the passions, to make them known through the ear, so she has joined to them looks and gestures, to manifest them to the eye. The one may be called Nature’s speech, the other Nature’s handwriting.

Nay, it is not too much to say that no one who feels what he utters can resist the use of natural gestures, or be said to feel without them. A languid manner, without any warmth or earnestness of delivery, may be such as almost to give the lie to what he utters.

‘Pleads he is earnest ? Look upon his face :
His eyes do drop no tears; his prayers are jest;
His words come from his mouth; ours from our breast,
He prays but faintly, and would be denied :
We pray with heart and soul.’*

Hamlet’s advice to the players should be read and studied by the orator, preacher and speaker, as well as by the actor :

‘Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounce it to you trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth it, as many of your players do, I had as lief the town-crier spoke my lines. Nor do not saw the air too much with your hand, thus; but use all gently : for in the very torrent, tempest, and (as I may say) whirlwind of passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance, that may give it smoothness. O, it offends me to the soul, to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings : who for the most part are capable of

* ‘Richard II.’ (Shakespeare).

nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise : I would have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Termagant : it out-Herods Herod : pray you avoid it.'

'Be not too tame neither, but let your own discretion be your tutor : suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature : for anything so overdone is *from* the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature : to show virtue her own image, scorn her own feature, and the very age and body of the time, his form and presence. Now this overdone, or come tardy off, though it make the unskilful laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve : the censure of which one must in your allowance o'erweigh a whole theatre of others. O, there be players that I have seen play, and heard others praise, and that highly, not to speak it profanely, that neither have the accent of Christians, pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen have made men, and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably.'*

Of all nations in the world, the English seem to have the least skill in the use of gesture. We do not sufficiently cultivate the subject in the art of public speaking. Indeed, in Parliament, the Bar and Pulpit, we are worse than deficient. It is better to use no gesture at all than that which is faulty and bad. No one can arrive at such a perfection of art as wholly to conceal his art. Yet there is one general principle which may be safely asserted, namely, that use becomes a second nature. A man who at first may employ a gesture so awkwardly as to approach the ridiculous, may, in time, become perfectly natural and unembarrassed, and arrive at that point at which he does with gracefulness what once he did with awkwardness. No science, however small in its dimensions, was ever yet brought to any degree of perfection without much labour in surmounting difficulties.

* 'Hamlet' (Shakespeare).

In whatever I may counsel the student upon this subject, let me say that I earnestly protest against affectation, unreality and unnaturalness. He who speaks from the heart has all that is needed for the foundation of a good delivery. But he is unwise if he is satisfied to rest there; he will cultivate to the best of his power the grace of delivery. It is to speaking what the setting is to the jewel.

SOME GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR GESTURE.

Begin your subject—to read or speak—in a low, quiet voice, keeping the body in perfect inaction, the mind in perfect equilibrium, and the feelings in perfect repose. Accustom yourself to look upon the largest audience as if you looked on a tranquil scene of nature. In a word, let the whole man be immovable. Let the weight of the body rest on the left foot, on which you should stand; the right foot a few inches from it, slightly in advance. And, having taken this position, do not move or shuffle the feet. The nervous movement and shuffling of the feet is destructive of repose. Throw the shoulders well back, so as to open the chest, that the air may have free access to and from the air-cells of the lungs. Let the head be erect, and look your audience in the face. Let the countenance be in repose. Elevating the eyebrows, knitting the brow, frowning and twitching the face are all tricks, easily contracted, but afterwards difficult to overcome.

I have said, and will repeat it, look your audience in the face. Pliny says that the most faithful interpreter of the feelings is the eye. There is no doubt that the soul speaks through the eyes, which are the chief seat of expression in every face. They have been fitly called ‘the windows of the soul’. Keep the hands out of your pockets, do not fiddle with your watch-chain, be calm and self-possessed.

This leads up to a point of the deepest importance to every speaker, which I will call in one word

CONFIDENCE .

It is not too much to say to every earnest student that he must at all hazards acquire confidence. Nervousness and diffidence are the sources of most of our faults, and they hinder us from doing justice to our subjects or ourselves. They make us appalled at our audience; afraid to trust ourselves lest we make a mistake. The only rules I have ever found help me to acquire confidence are :

Firstly, to feel that what I have to say is worth hearing.

Secondly, thoroughly to master my subject. We generally have confidence in doing that with which we are familiar.

Thirdly, to overcome timidity by an indomitable effort of my own will.

THE USE OF THE HANDS.

It is often said, and with much truth, that when speaking in public an Englishman never knows what to do with his hands. In ordinary conversation with a friend, in private, this is not the case. Then he naturally illustrates what he is saying, and the use of his hands is probably quite faultless; but the moment he steps upon the platform or enters the pulpit he becomes stiff and awkward. This teaches us that, just in proportion as we return to Nature, we shall use our hands in natural gestures, without giving the matter a thought. It is impossible, on the written page, to give definite teaching as to the modes of using the hands. These must either be taught by one who has himself studied them, or acquired by the student himself, which is better still. For, as Hume well said, there are two kinds of education which a man receives—the first, that

which he gets from others; the second, that which he gives himself, and, he adds, 'the second is better than the first.'

All that can here be said in respect to the use of the hands in public speaking is that with them we can beseech, demand or promise; call, dismiss; beg, deny; supplicate or threaten. With the hands we can show joy or sorrow, love or hate, admiration or contempt; and much more might be said on the natural use of the hands.

I recommend every student to cultivate the action of both right and left hand in speaking. This is the only way to acquire the free, easy, unconstrained use of both hands. We should never raise the hands above the head, except when speaking of heaven. I feel that gesture is such a difficult matter to write upon that I will only add I shall be most happy to answer any questions from correspondents if they are pleased to write to me.

To sum up what I have said—all gesture or action should be perfectly easy and natural. It should be sparingly used, not constantly. Adapt each gesture to the occasion or circumstance. As Shakspeare says to us, at the heading of this chapter, 'Suit the action to the word—the word to the action.' Avoid the most remote thought of display, which must disgust all sensible people. The best speakers in every age have been famous for simplicity, which charms and enchains every hearer. There is in everyone of us an indescribable something which we call nature, which always looks for and recognises the inspirations of nature in us. Therefore, when voice and breath are under your control, if you fully enter into the spirit of your author, and let your feelings both prompt and govern your action, you cannot greatly err. The victory is more than half won when you fully feel and realize what you read or speak.

The three principal marks of good and correct action in speaking are :

- (i.) Simplicity, which adheres to nature.
- (ii.) Correctness, which adapts itself to the words to be spoken.
- (iii.) Grace, as opposed to awkwardness.

Never adopt a gesture which you do not make your own by appropriation. All gestures, to be exponents of what we feel, must originate within. Feeling knows more than art.

Above all, never be a servile imitator of the gestures of another, or your own will become a thing of borrowed 'shreds and patches.' In everything you do, or attempt to do, always preserve your own identity.

CHAPTER XIX.

ON SELF-POSSESSION.

‘Confidence is a plant of slow growth.’—

LORD CHATHAM.

IN a country like ours, where the possession of true eloquence may raise a man from poverty and obscurity to rank, no effort and study spent on that noble art can be too great. The voice of song is not sweeter than the voice of eloquence among men. It is generally an accepted idea that rich and electric eloquence is a gift. Few, however, possess great natural gifts. All the extraordinary endowments of intellect, imagination, person, countenance and voice, without which the great orator does not exist, belong to few men in a century. In the majority of cases eloquence in speaking, and culture in reading, are the results of continuous practice. If we could strike the average of success we should find that work beats genius all the world over. Homer did not write his ‘Iliad,’ Milton did not write his ‘Paradise Lost,’ nor Newton his ‘Principia,’ without immense labour.

Demosthenes laboured not only in youth, but in manhood, with incessant activity. How far he succeeded may be gathered from the fact that when Demosthenes was to speak people flocked to hear him from all parts of Greece. The rhetoric of the Romans was, in refinement, far inferior to that of the Athenians. But their greatest orators, like Cicero and Antony,

were to be found in the schools of rhetoric, even at advanced periods of life, endeavouring to obtain correctness of pronunciation, modulation of voice, gracefulness in gesture, and seeking to reach oratorical perfection.

The House of Commons, which is called our popular assembly, would seem to present the most favourable field for the cultivation and display of eloquence in our country; nor are time and opportunity wanting to the members of that body, generally speaking, for the cultivation of it. Yet there are circumstances connected with that House which narrow the incentives to eloquent public speaking. Not that members of that House are deficient in intellectual ability and refinement of feeling; but it is well known that, as a body, they seldom, if ever, come together on great questions in that undetermined state of opinion which is calculated to call out high oratorical effort. No matter from which side of the House a measure may come, the mover of it, before he rises to enforce it, knows almost to a unit the members who will support or oppose his motion. He cannot hope, by any argument he can use, by any pathetic appeals he can make, to add one to the number of his supporters, or remove one from the list of his opponents. Thus a Parliamentary speech differs from other efforts in one of the most essential ingredients of eloquence by which excellence may be reached. If the Bar were hampered or the Pulpit crippled by such conditions, it would harrow their capabilities.

It may be generally stated that the three great schools which afford the fullest scope for the cultivation of eloquence and correct speaking are Parliament, the Bar, and the Pulpit. True, every man—and every woman also—should cultivate the art of good speaking; we all need it. The time comes to us all when we feel keenly its loss if we do not possess it. But to

every member of the House, the Bar and the Church it is indispensable. Without it he cannot possibly succeed.

The names of those in the word who could 'speak well' are brilliant. A Demosthenes, the magic music and witchery of whose eloquence it is impossible to translate or describe; a Cicero, whose oratory was copious, ornate and magnificent; a Peter and Paul, pleading in the cause of Heaven, holding vast multitudes in breathless silence, and making even judges and kings tremble in high places; in more modern times a Chatham, a Burke, a Pitt in Parliament; a Bourdaloue, a Massillon and a Whitfield in the pulpit; with orators of our own time, some few of whom will almost bear comparison with those who have gone before. It is probable, however, that no orator of modern times has ever approached William Pitt, Earl Chatham. Of him Macaulay said; 'His figure, when he rose in the House, was graceful and commanding, his features high and noble, his eye full of fire. His splendid voice, when he sank it to a whisper, was heard to the remotest benches; and when he raised it to its full volume it rose like the swell of the organ of a great cathedral, and was heard through the lobbies. His play of countenance was wonderful, and he could disconcert an opponent by a single glance of scorn. Every tone, from the impassioned appeal to the thrilling whisper, was perfectly at his command.'

I have endeavoured in previous chapters to speak of the topics which may help the student to cultivate himself in the art of reading and speaking. In this I reach a subject of deep importance to everyone—

SELF-POSSESSION.

Without this none of us can do the least justice to one's self or one's subject. To everyone standing on the threshold

of life the question, 'How may I best succeed ?' is one of surpassing interest. Whether a man shall be successful in his calling may more or less be predicted from the manner in which he prepares himself for it. Undoubtedly the first grand requisite is a spirit of entire self-consecration to the work in hand, so that whatever a man has to speak or to read

'Its story, and glory, and beauty, and song,
Should glow in his heart and burn on his tongue.'

I have found by experience, like others, that in proportion as the mind is steeped in the subject it has to deal with, and absorbed in it, one forgets self and forgets everyone present. I believe this to be the best, if not the only, way to reach self-possession, the only way in which a speaker will become master of his nerves, and therefore master of himself. Nothing so achieves self-forgetfulness as to become wholly engaged in one's subject. This is the most rational way of raising one's self above that timid regard to an audience, which is so ready to disconcert a speaker both as to what he is to say and as to his manner of saying it.

The question is often asked me : 'Can anyone of a very nervous temperament ever hope to be a good reader or speaker ?' I answer, 'Certainly, when that nervousness is kept under control.' 'But,' it is again asked, 'can this ever be done ?' My answer is : 'Certainly it can be done.' And, I would add, 'It *must* be done.' Locke says : 'A persuasion that we can overcome any difficulties we meet with seldom fails to carry us through them.' Diffidence of our own powers is doubtless an incentive to put forth our best efforts; and modesty never yet hurt any good cause. while over-confidence has often damaged it. At the same time, confidence in one's self is a chief nurse of success. and every student must aim at this, and strive to reach the

happy mean between too little confidence and overconfidence in his own powers. Too great confidence is the likeliest way to prevent success, and too little confidence the likeliest way to fail.

Health is a prime factor for helping us to make the best of our natural endowments. We all work at a great pace in the present day, but I do not see why public speakers should not enjoy as good health and live as long as others. Speaking, reading, and singing are all conducive to health, and tend to correct delicacy of the chest. One reason is that the capacity of the lungs is increased by the use of the voice. Diseases of the throat and loss of voice in public speakers are often the result of the wrong use of the voice, or of wrong breathing. But they disappear when we return to Nature, and speak and breathe according to her laws.

For these reasons more attention is now given to physical education than at any former period. That is undoubtedly the best regimen which takes the child and youth to maturity in such a manner as to expand the strength of muscles, limbs, and voice. Given that a man has health—the first and best of all temporal blessings—there can be no excuse for his giving way to that sensitive and nervous temperament which cripples him at every step, and hinders him from ever excelling in public. But one great bane in public speakers, whether in Parliament, at the Bar, or in the Pulpit, is

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

This is one of the worst enemies to self-possession. The exercise of this fault, which is more or less inherent to us all, tells in two directions. It either leads a man to whisper to himself, 'How well I am doing this,' which is fatal to all real success; or to whisper to himself, 'How badly I am doing

this.' This is almost equally fatal to all excellence. The first phase of self-consciousness engenders conceit and audacity; it leads to self-complacency and self-satisfaction. And once author or speaker, advocate or preacher, reaches this point, he does not simply stand still in attainments; he gradually goes back and goes down. This is the reason so many men with good ability never excel. Conceit has marred their progress, and they stop short of excellence, for the reason that they are perfectly self-satisfied. No worse stage can be reached by any man than this. The instances are many of men of natural powers whose beginning promised much, but who, as they advanced, degenerated because they were satisfied with their gifts, and made no effort to improve them.

The second phase of self-consciousness engenders cowardice, and the loss of all courage. The speaker looks down on himself, and, like Peter on the waters, begins to sink. He loses, by degrees, all confidence in his own powers.

The one man grows indolent through self-confidence; the other grows timid through self-distrustfulness.

Longfellow has beautifully said : 'The talent of success is nothing more than doing well whatever you have to do, without a thought of fame.' This is but another way of saying : 'Never think of yourself when reading or speaking, but only of your subject.' He who conscientiously follows this advice is the most likely to acquire self-possession. While he will always be modest and diffident, he will also be confident of his subject and of himself, not causing you to think much of him, but much of the things which he speaks. In order to interpret an author properly, we must never attempt it until we have conceived a clear, distinct idea of it, and feel its meaning in our inmost heart. All emotions must be from within, not from without. When a speaker is engaged on his subject he

should not then have to think at all of his manner, or tones, or gestures. If he is so occupied, self-consciousness and affectation will appear. And wherever there is the least tinge of conceit, the hold of the heart is immediately lost. All affectation is the ruin of good reading and speaking. Whatever is natural will please, because it shows us the man, not the manner. He who is thoroughly in earnest, whose mind is saturated with his subject, will leave Nature to prompt the manner of delivery. And of every one who speaks straight from the heart, it may be truly said that 'Truth itself will come mended from his tongue.'

CHAPTER XX.

ON SOME TRIFLES.

‘There is nothing insignificant—nothing.’

COLERIDGE.

THERE have been great artists who, by a few bold strokes, could fling upon the canvas the fruit of their genius. But even then, as one looks at the picture, there is an involuntary feeling that it seems unfinished. The wish almost leaps to the lip, ‘If he could but have found time to finish it.’ There are few of us that can sit down to a picture, book, or poem, and throw it off—red-hot and finished. We have need to touch and *retouch*—write and *rewrite*. Each time we review our work, we find it is capable of improvement. There is still some touch, trifle, or detail, which will add to its symmetry. We have sometimes seen the autograph manuscript of our poets, like poor Robert Burns’, and the pages are blurred with corrections and erasures, showing many changes or adaptations in the poem.

I remember once asking Mary Sewell, who wrote ‘Ballads for the People,’ how she attained to such marvellous simplicity. She said : ‘My plan is, first of all, to write the story just as it comes off my mind. Then I put it away, and in two or three days I take it out and go over it carefully; wherever I have put a word of three syllables, I try to replace it by a word of two syllables. Then I put it away a second time, and in two

or three days take it in hand again; and wherever I find words of two syllables, I try to substitute words of one syllable.'

Her 'Ballads' are triumphs in simplicity, and this was the way in which she reached it. I have often recalled Mary Sewell's recipe for simplicity, and thought how well it might be if all speakers, preachers, and pleaders would practise it, instead of using grand words—*sesquipedalia verba*—such as 'volition' for 'will'; 'intellectual process' for 'thinking'; 'moral obligation' for 'duty'. How simple was the 'Prince of all Preachers'—our Master: 'I am the way, the truth, and the life' (all words of one syllable); 'I am the light of the world.' 'I am the bread of life' (all words of one syllable).*

What is true of pictures and poems, is equally true of the art of reading and speaking.

'There is nothing insignificant—nothing.'

This is another way of saying that in reading and speaking, as in all else we do, 'there is no such thing as a trifle.' Where goldsmiths work, the very dust is valuable. From the sweepings of the floor hundreds of pounds are annually extracted. It was not Christopher Wren who built the Cathedral of St. Paul's, but thousands of nameless masons, and hodmen, and joiners. So of life itself. Every little thread is helping to weave the great web, though the pattern is not shown or known till the other side is turned. None of us can measure trifles. Nothing is small. It was from the incident of a little frightened bird flying into his bosom that Wesley wrote the matchless old hymn:

'Jesu, lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly.'

* It may be replied, 'These words, in the original, are of more than one syllable.' But in writing on English language, I must adhere to our own rendering for an example.

Some years ago a murdered man was indented—though the corpse was almost consumed in quicklime—by the dentist's number on the plate of the false teeth which the man had worn. An apprentice once made a beautiful window for a cathedral out of the pieces of glass his master had thrown away. Many a small pen has written a great book. Who shall say there is such a thing as a trifle ? The Bible reduces our skill in speaking down to a single verse : 'A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver'—teaching us not only to say the right thing at the right time, but in the right way. And it is a great incentive to us to attend to every word, when even 'a word fitly spoken,' is compared to a golden apple lying in a basket of frosted silver. This is the principle I wish to follow in this chapter. I propose to speak about

SOME TRIFLES.

There are not a few persons who think that even the art I am attempting to write upon is a trifle—of no importance, and that you had far better leave people to Nature than teach them Art. Is this, however, the plan we pursue in education, in music, in painting, or in any science ? Do we leave our boys and girls to Nature, or do we try to teach them whatever is worth knowing ? I have no hesitation in saying that one great need of Parliament is better speakers. You can count Pitt, Burke, Sheridan, Gladstone, and Salisbury on five fingers. One great need of the Bar is better pleaders. You can count the late silver-voiced Lord Coleridge, Lord Russell, Sir Henry James, Sir Edward Clarke, and Frank Lockwood on five fingers. One great need of the Church is better preachers. You can count the late Bishop Wilberforce, Archbishop Magee, and Henry Melvill on three fingers. Everyone of us gives cause for criticism on his delivery of momentous truths. With

many of us clergy, a total neglect of proper intonation, emphasis, and inflection often renders our hearers nervous and restless and instead of inspiring the audience we address, irritation is excited by our entire lack of skill in reaching their hearts. It will be said by some, 'He who speaks to men as God's ambassador, should think of truth, not of rhetoric; 'tis pitiful to court applause, or even approval, when he should win a soul.' In this we must all thoroughly agree. But I have never been able to see why we should not 'put truth to the best advantage.' I agree with the words of an aged minister, 'If I were permitted to go back and begin again, I would not study books less, but I would study men more. I would not study the matter of my sermons less, but I would study the manner more.'

A great deal of nonsense has been spoken written against clergy who try to improve themselves in the art of speaking. The fact is, we are sent as preachers to secure the attention of men, to interest them in heavenly truth, and to persuade them. Let us speak to men with all the mastery of language we can command. To say this is not to advocate the declamatory, affected, stilted, clerical tone. Let us avoid this style altogether, and speak naturally. 'Don't preach to us to-day,' said a man to his pastor; 'just talk to us.' How many a forbearing congregation, if they could only find a voice during the sermon, would cry out to the drone in the pulpit : 'For mercy's sake, don't preach to us any longer; do just talk to us !' If I may dare to speak to the clergy, I would say : Speak from the pulpit naturally; talk to the people in plain and earnest words. I have heard clergy preach a sermon in one continuous monotone; others speak up and down, and end every sentence on the same note. The most able sermon so spoken loses all its force. Speak, do not sing. Speak in all the range of your human voice.

Speak—do not bawl. A low tone with clear enunciation fills a cathedral. It is the unnatural loud tone that wakes the sleeping echoes. ‘How do you like your new preacher?’ said one neighbour to another. ‘Oh, he gets on wonderfully; he grows louder and louder.’ Such a voice as that exhausts the speaker, and never has been known to touch the heart of any hearer. A great actress (Mrs. Siddons) studied for years to make her whisper audible to two thousand listeners, and she succeeded.

One trifle—which seems so, but which, like a dead fly, spoils the ointment—is the danger of placing the emphasis, or stress of voice, on the small word in a sentence. Thus, I have heard it read, ‘God *is* love.’ These three monosyllables are capable of three different emphases. If we say ‘*God* is love,’ we imply that, above all other beings, God is love. If we say ‘God is *love*,’ we imply that, above all other, and greater than all other, attributes of God, stands forth His glorious attribute of love. But if we lay the false emphasis on the auxiliary word ‘is’ and say ‘God *is* love,’ we imply that someone has asserted the contrary—someone has said ‘God is *not* love’; and you who believe that He is love, who know that He is love, stand up as His follower and disciple, and contradict this maligner of God’s character, and insist that ‘God is love.’

This false emphasis on the auxiliary verb might be exemplified by many instances. Two of the most common among the clergy are :

‘Our Father, which *art* in Heaven.’

It is clear that the thought in this line is ‘Our Father’; and further, that He is ‘in heaven.’ The auxiliary is, therefore, of no importance, save as the small link in the chain of the sentence connecting ‘Our Father’ with ‘in heaven,’ and it ought to be

read with pathos and feeling on 'Father,' and the rest of the line smoothly, thus :

'Our *Father*—which art in *Heaven*.'

If we read these opening words of the Lord's Prayer with the false emphasis (as ninety-nine do out of every hundred), we make the same mistake as in the last instance I gave. We must assume that someone has said that 'Our Father' is not, does not reside 'in heaven.' And we insist that He *is* in heaven. So we say 'Our Father which *art* in heaven.'

The other instance of the false emphasis on the auxiliary verb is that, over and over again, we hear the clergy say in the General Confession : 'We have left undone those things which we ought to *have* done.' Whereas the only true reading is : 'We have left *undone* those things which we *ought* to have *done*; and we *have done* those things which we ought *not* to have done.' I ask every true student of the art of reading to give most thoughtful attention to the use of the auxiliary verb. The right emphasis on it, in its various uses, is 'no trifle.'

A second trifle I shall touch on is the treatment of 'ed' at the end of words. Fifty years ago, in all reading of Holy Scripture and the Liturgy, it was an accepted dogma that 'ed' at the end of every word that carried it was to be separately pronounced. Thus, 'errèd' and 'strayèd,' 'belovèd,' 'hallowèd be Thy name,' and so forth. But I am glad to observe that this practice is nearly obsolete. It was adopted by all teachers of the reading of the Liturgy, because it was thought to add dignity and reverence to the reading. But if it is to be carried out at all, it must clearly apply to words only to which the 'ed' is added, as 'showèd,' 'followèd.' It must never be heard in such words as 'believed,' 'settled,' 'assembled,' as in all such cases only the letter 'd' is added. For my own part—and only

speaking for myself—I always treat the ‘ed’ as silent. My reason is that it is natural, and the other reading is non-natural. We should think it non-natural to say ‘the cattle lowèd,’ ‘the dog barkèd,’ ‘the horse neighèd.’ Rather would we say always, ‘the cattle lowed,’ ‘the dog barked,’ ‘the horse neighed.’ A little study will enable every reader to determine what course to follow in the treatment of ‘ed.’ Even in reading the most sacred things, it seems to me non-natural to say, ‘He lovèd me, and gave Himself for me’; or to read in the Acts of the Apostles, ‘they cast four anchors from the stern, and wishèd for the day.’ In fact, we ought to pronounce words in the Bible as we do in other books; for, while we should always read it with reverence, we cannot be too natural.

On the same principle ‘wouldèst,’ and its relatives ‘couldèst’ and ‘shouldèst,’ sound so awkward when pronounced with two syllables, that I advise the reader to treat them as monosyllables, and pronounce them ‘wouldst,’ ‘couldst,’ and ‘shouldst.’

A third trifle I shall notice is the use of ‘my.’ The general rule is that, except when it is markedly emphatic—as ‘My Lord and my God,’ or ‘I know that my Redeemer liveth’—it should be read short. This is universally to be observed in reading poetry. Thus, in Byron’s ‘Prisoner of Chillon,’ we must read :

‘My hair is grey, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men’s have grown from sudden fears;
My limbs are bowed, but not with toil,
For they have been a dungeon’s spoil.’

Where, however, it implies possession, it must be read long : ‘My garden is as large as yours’; ‘he was my friend, not yours’; ‘this is not your book; it is my book.’

My object in writing on so-called 'trifles' in this chapter will be attained if it awakens in the mind a closer attention to them, and a more careful study of them. This will engender thought; and it is impossible to bestow too much thought on this subject. There are two rules which we should apply to all our study of the difficult art of reading. The one is—read a subject with care and interest; the other is—not only read, but—*think*. When you have read a page, close the book and try to recall the ideas.

Follow this plan faithfully, and you have a golden key. You will never then overlook 'trifles.' In-attentive, thoughtless reading will make mere mechanical readers and speakers. There are other things which are injurious to the reader and speaker. One of these is reading trashy novels. Another is the habit (one, I fear, which we all form in the present day) of skimming our newspapers for items of news, bits of information, rapidly following each other, confusedly jumbled together, few of them to be thought of or recalled again.

Rather let us try to revivify what we read by thought. Then, having passed it through the sieve of our own mind, and have winnowed the wheat from the chaff, we shall throw away the latter, and retain the former for use. It is not the amount of reading, but the method of reading, that must settle the question of gain or loss to the mind. It does not follow that all who read much, know much. We may read—mechanically—numerically as many books as others, and yet remain almost as ignorant as we were. So said John Milton :

‘who reads

Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
A spirit and judgment equal or superior—
Uncertain and unsettled still remains—
Deep versed in books, but shallow in himself.’

CHAPTER XXI.

SOME VOICE EXERCISES.

‘Learn before thou speak.’—THE SON OF SIRACH (*Ecclus.* xviii. 19).

WHAT is the reason so few, whose vocation is to be public teachers, are themselves clear, distinct, natural speakers, whom you can hear even in difficult buildings, and to whom it is a pleasure to listen ? The reason may be found not far from the words of the Son of Sirach, which head this chapter; they do not learn before they speak. A tailor or shoemaker is put under a master-tailor or master-shoemaker for years before he starts for himself; but public speakers start at once, *without one hour's instruction*, in that which is to them the most weighty and most important subject, and without which all other accomplishments are worth nothing—namely, the power of speaking their own mother-tongue. The mind is the architect, the body is its workman, and the voice is the instrument. These three—mind, body, and voice—must work together. The end of all speaking is to be heard. If we fail in this, we may as well be silent. If a student should inquire, ‘How am I to improve mind, body, and voice ?’ I answer, as I should to one studying the art of music, by one thing :

PRACTICE.

To this end I propose to give some voice exercises, which, I am confident, will reward every student who uses them conscientiously.

But before doing this, I would say to every reader and speaker :

Stand erect, with the shoulders depressed and thrown back, so as to expand the chest; prevent the body from bending, and breathe easily, freely, and frequently; open the mouth wide enough to admit two fingers sidewise between the teeth, and keep the lips free and yet firm, that every word may be spoken with clearness and precision; let there be neither too much nor too little moisture in the mouth. A piece of cork (as I have already advised), about an inch in height, placed between the front teeth perpendicularly while practising, will be found most useful in acquiring the habit of opening the mouth. The vocal gymnastics which I propose to set before students will produce astonishing power and flexibility of voice, making it strong, clear, liquid, musical, and under complete control; and they will be found healthful and, I hope, not dull. They will engage the muscles, the palate, tongue, teeth, and lips, and will immensely improve rapidity, precision, and effect in speaking. Let the student remember that it is not the quantity read, but the manner of reading, that will give him complete mastery over his vocal powers and over the elements of language.

The first thing to which attention must be given is the

VOWEL SOUNDS.

Vowels are all formed in the larynx. The vowels constitute the essence of words, and consonants give them

their proper form. It is to the judicious prolongation of vowel-sounds that pronunciation owes one of its greatest beauties. Vowel-sounds make the music of language. The following words will embody all the sounds of the five vowels : *a, e, i, o, u*;

Ale, ah, all, at; eel, ell; isle, ill; old, ooze, on; mute, up, full; oil, ounce.

In the voice gymnastics that will be furnished to the student, the words are put together entirely for sound, not for sense. Be very particular to pronounce every sound fully, correctly, and distinctly. In making use of them, do not hurry your enunciation, precipitating syllable over syllable, and word upon word, nor run them together in confusion; but deliver them slowly and articulately, like coins from the mint, perfectly finished, struck in due succession, and of full weight. By faithful practice of the difficult combinations which I propose to give, surprising flexibility of voice and distinctness of articulation will be acquired.

AN EXERCISE ON VOWELS.

‘Ba-al, the o-ri-ent a-e-ronaut, the cham-pi-on of fi-e-ry scor-pi-ons, took his a-e-ri-al flight into the ge-o-metric-al em-py-re-an, and dropped a beau-ti-ful vi-o-let into the ap-ple or-chard, where they sung hy-me-ne-al re-qui-ems.’ ‘Be-el-ze-bub vi-o-lent-ly snatched the va-ri-e-ga-ted di-a-dem from the Zo-o-log-i-cal cra-ni-um, and placed it on the Eu-ro-pe-an gen-i-i, to a-mel-i-o-rate their in-cho-ate i-de-as of in-val-i-da-ting the pi-te-ous man-tu-a-ma-kers with the tri-en-ni-al pan-a-ce-a of Soc-i-o-lo-gy on the

lin-e-a-ment of a-ri-es, under the ac-cu-mu-la-ted ci-ta-del of the Acropo-lis.'

This exercise will suffice to call attention to the importance of the vowel sounds, so that each sound shall be perfectly shaped, and be given slowly, clearly, and distinctly. The student can enlarge on this practice for himself. I now pass on to give a series of

CONSONANT EXERCISES.

For the purpose of developing and training the voice and ear. In reading and speaking, a thorough, systematic practice on all the consonants is absolutely essential. The only solid foundation for good speaking is the perfect knowledge and study of the vowel and consonant sounds in our language. Error here will carry its taint of a vicious pronunciation every-where in our utterances, for bad habits are stubborn things.

SOUNDS OF CONSONANT 'B'.

'Bah,' 'ball,' 'bat,' 'be,' 'beg,' 'bide,' 'bid,' 'bode,' 'boon,' 'boss,' 'buss,' 'brute,' 'boil,' 'bound.'

EXERCISE ON CONSONANT 'B'

'The robin imbibed bobbin, and gobbled cabbage.' 'The robber blabbed barbarously, and bamboozled the Nabob.' 'Jacob dabbled in ribbons.' 'The horse jibbed with the cobbler, when he saw a baboon.' 'The baby gabbled gibberish, and bit blackberries.' 'The rabble's hobby is to browbeat.' 'He beat the bramble-bushes for bilberries, and bribed the booby of his bombastic blackbird.'

B is always silent in the following words : 'Debt,' 'subtle,' 'doubt,' 'dumb,' 'lamb,' 'comb,' 'thumb,' 'crumb,' 'limb,' 'climb,' 'succumb,' 'bdellium.'

SOUNDS OF CONSONANT 'C'.

(1) This consonant has four sounds. The first is soft, and like that of *s*. Thus : 'The city of Cincinnati is a fascinating solace for civil society.' 'Cicero and Cecilia, with tacit reciprocity, dilacerate the acid pumice.' 'The acidity of the citron in the cellar excites the precipitate discipline of the facile diocesan.'

(2) The second sound of *c* is hard, and like that of *k*. Thus: 'Came,' 'car,' 'call,' 'cap,' 'cove,' 'cut,' 'cute,' 'crude,' 'coil,' 'cloud.' 'Clark comes to catch crabs and crawfish. to cram his cow.' 'The croaking sceptic in moc-assins succumbs to the arctic spectacle and accommodates his accurate account of the occult stucco to the ec-liptic.' 'The crowd claims the clocks, and climbs the cliffs that crunched the crows, to clutch the microcosm.'

So, likewise, *ch* often have the sound of *k*, the *h* being silent. Thus : 'The chimerical architect catechises the character of the chromatic chorus and the archives of Munich.'

(3) The third sound of *c* is almost as soft as that of *z*. Thus : 'The discerner discernibly discerns discernible things.' 'The sacrificer sacrifices the sacrifice on the altar of sacrifice, and sufficeth the law of sacrifice.'

(4) The fourth sound of *c* is like *sh*. Thus : 'Ocean. Judicious Phocion, tenacious of his luscious species, appreciates his associates with saponaceous prescience.'

‘A Grecian proficient, with capacious superficies, depreciates the ferocious and rapacious provincialisms of Cappadocia.’ ‘The champagne of the precious optician satisfied the charlatans of the marchioness.’

SOUNDS OF CONSONANT ‘D’.

D has two sounds, as in ‘dame,’ ‘dart,’ ‘dawn,’ ‘dub,’ ‘deed,’ ‘dead’; ‘die,’ ‘did’; ‘do,’ ‘dog,’ ‘dole’; ‘duck,’ ‘duke,’ ‘druid’ : ‘A dandy defrauded his daughter of a saddle.’ ‘The double-headed Paddy, nodding at noonday, determined to riddle the dogged dryads till doomsday.’ ‘They dreaded the day dawn.’

The second sound of *d* is that of *t* when at the end of words : ‘He faced and cursed the vex’d friend who watch’d and tripp’d his crisp’d feet.’ ‘He piped a tune for the wretched; he jump’d and scratched his blanch’d face, which eclips’d the horse.’

SOUND OF THE CONSONANT ‘F’.

F has two sounds; the first is at the beginning of a syllable, as ‘fife,’ ‘father,’ ‘faithful,’ ‘fretful,’ ‘affable,’ ‘fit,’ ‘fowl,’ ‘buf-foon,’ ‘fright,’ ‘fraught,’ ‘final,’ and so forth. The second sound of *f* is at the end of a syllable, and is somewhat like *v*, as ‘of,’ ‘whereof’; or the shorter sound, as ‘off,’ ‘cuff.’

There is the irregular sound of *f*, which is conveyed by *ph* and *gh*, as : ‘Philip Brough laughed enough.’ ‘The seraph’s prophecy was lithographed in the philosophy of physics.’

The difficulties of pronunciation in our language may be illustrated by the following : ‘Though the tough cough ploughed through me, the drought brought me enough dough in the borough.’ Avoid saying ‘a piece-o’cake’ for ‘a piece of cake,’ or ‘gim-me some’ instead of ‘give me some.’

SOUND OF CONSONANT ‘G’.

G has three sounds—first, like the letter *j*, as ‘general,’ ‘giant,’ ‘genius’ : ‘The original magic of the gipsy generated the exaggerated genealogy of the logical sergeant,’

The second sound of *g* is hard, as ‘game,’ ‘cigar’ : ‘Giddy goose got a cigar and gave it to the beggar.’ ‘The Brobdnagian growls over his green-glass goggles; and the giggling girl gloats over the great granary, and groans at the guests.’

The third sound of *g* is somewhat like *zh*. But the words in which this sound occurs are French words Anglicized, as : ‘The protégé in the menagerie saw the mirage, and the playful badinage put on rouge.’

There is another sound of *g* combined with *h*, but, strictly speaking, the *h* is silent, as : ‘The ghastly burgher stood aghast to see a ghost take the gherkins; and the neighbour taught his daughter to plough when on furlough.’

SOUND OF THE CONSONANT ‘H.’

The letter *h* has but one sound, which is an aspirate, produced by breathing, as : ‘His hale highness holds high his haughty head, and exhibits himself in the humid hall.’ ‘The hard hedge-hog, heedless of his havoc of the horrible beetles, hies to his hole with his whole head.’ ‘The gardener

hit the humming-bee into his hive on the day of harvest-home.'

The letter *h* is silent at the beginning and end of many words, as : 'The heiress in the hour of honest humour repeated her rhymy rhetoric, while Thomas spoke to Ahijah, Dinah, Elijah, Hannah, Jonah, Isaiah, Obadiah, Terah, and Sarah in Nineveh and Pishgah.'

The proper sound of the letter *h* is of great importance in speaking. Those who have fallen into the habit of omitting the *h* when it ought to be pronounced, or putting it in where it does not exist, must overcome this terrible fault by daily practice, by correcting such an example as the following : 'Hi 'it my 'orse 'ard, hand 'urried hout to 'unt 'ogs; hand got hoff my 'igh 'orse, hand 'itched 'im hup to a hoak tree, hand gave 'im hoats to heat.' Or the following : 'How do you spell your name, Hellier ?' 'Why, there's a hachge, hand a he, hand a hell, hand a hell, hand a hi, hand a he, hand a harr, hand hif that don't spell 'ellier, hi'll heat my 'art.'

The omission of the aspirate is a far more common fault than its gratuitous introduction. It may seem impertinent to write upon such a subject, but the fault is anything but rare among those who were left when young too much among servants. It is a fault that spoils all good speaking, and one which can be remedied only by the most careful watchfulness and recollection. But there is a far more widely-spread slovenliness in this matter, against which even cultured speakers need to be on their guard. It is heard in short words which come in juxtaposition. Thus, 'he who,' rapidly uttered, too often becomes 'heoo'; and 'he of whom,' 'he ovoom.' It must be admitted that the

formation of two or more aspirates following each other is not easy, as : ‘He has had headway.’ ‘He had hounds here.’ ‘He held his handsome horses hard by his house on high hills.’

The student should write out for himself exercises on the letter *h*, both silent and aspirated.

Beware, not only in the case of the letter *h*, but in all cultured speaking, of omissions and additions. Say ‘Boston notion,’ not ‘Boston-ocean’; ‘regain either,’ not ‘regain-either’: ‘then apples fell,’ not ‘the napples fell.’ I can scarcely lay too much stress on the importance of these consonant exercises. They will teach the student, as the master does his apprentice. They teach the foundation principles of all reading and speaking, and how to apply them; and when the student has thoroughly mastered them, he will have no further use for them. They will be embodied in his speaking, and serve much the same purpose as the finger-post does to the traveller. Once he thoroughly knows the way, he has no further need for it.

If practice enables a person with the ten fingers to accomplish almost anything on an instrument of music—as on the piano or violin—consider how much may be done in the art of reading and speaking by those who have trained the vocal organs of speech in the same way. And for doing this there is nothing like vocal exercise of the voice, tongue, teeth, and lips.

CHAPTER XXII.

VOICE EXERCISES (*continued*)

‘Most of those excellences which are regarded as natural endowments will be found, when looked at more closely, to be the product of repeated exercise.’—

LOCKE.

I HOPE and believe that to those determined on resolute practice these vocal exercises will be found the most useful, if not the most interesting, part of this book. In reading and speaking, we must learnt to rely but little on the assistance of others. The conviction once acquired that progress depends on self exertion is the starting-point in all self-improvement.

Hard industry in the principles of reading and speaking will bring us to marvellous results. A genius is usually considered to be one endowed with such rare faculties that he can accomplish anything without labour. The idea is that such a one learns a subject without studying it, and can be eloquent without any preparation whatever. While ordinary people have to toil for knowledge by reading, a genius is supposed to reach it by a single bound. Such minds may exist—one or two of them, perhaps, in a century. But it is well to remember that those things which the world will not let die have not only been the conceptions of genius,

but the products of toil. That which genius accomplishes at one impulse, industry reaches by successive efforts. What genius performs at the first blow, industry can do by a succession of blows; so that, within fair limits, industry is a substitute for genius. Moreover, genius needs industry, and cannot be perfected without it. Milton's imagination conceived his visions, but his industry crystallized them. Michael Angelo's genius started his masterpieces, but his industry enshrined them in marble.

Between perfection and mediocrity there are many intermediate places which we may reach with honour; and it is because the right use of our powers depends on cultivation, and is lost through neglect, that I am asking students seriously to apply themselves to the vocal exercises which I am now placing before them for practice.

I pass on in the series of

CONSONANT EXERCISES.

If these are methodically used, all the varied sounds of our language will be mastered.

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'J'.

This has but one sound. 'The jolly judge, jealous of John's jewels, jasper and jacinth, jeopardied the jangling jailer's journey, jesting at justice; and jumping into juniper juice, joined Jubal, Jacob, Jael, Jaaziniah, Jehoshaphat, Jehu, Jehoash, Jehoiada, Jehoram, Josiah, Jehoiakin, and Jehoiakim; jerking the javelin of Jupiter from Jairus, and jamming it into the Jew's jaw, to the joy of the jeering jockey.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'K'.

This has one sound; it is hard, like the second sound of *c* (see Chapter XXI.), as 'Korah kept the Kenite's kerchiefs under the key of Kedar.' 'The keeper of kernels kindled the kettle, and keenly kicked the kid, killing the king's kind kinsman.'

In other words, *k* is soft and silent, like the letter *n* in 'nee,' As 'kneeling,' 'knocking'; 'knowing knowledge which he knew that I know'; 'he knocked the knotted knot with his knife.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'L'.

This has only one sound, as in 'lo' and 'lay.' 'The little laird loudly lauds the lily-light lamb on the lawn the live-long day.' 'Lemuel Leigh-Lye loves the lullaby of the lord's lovely lady, and genteelly listens to the Lollard's lively lore.' 'The litigious lawyer legally tells his lonesome, luckless client that the law legalizes the illogical legislation of the land, and laughs at the leather-looking leviathan, lying along the lizard's loathsome load of lanky locusts, while the Levite from Lebanon looks for the lost legion of Libyans in Laodicea.'

L is silent in 'balm,' 'calm,' 'salve,' 'psalm,' 'would,' 'could,' 'should,' 'chalk,' 'talk,' 'halser' (hawser), 'folk,' 'salmon,' 'almond,' 'Malmsey.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'M'.

This has only one sound, as 'main,' 'me,' 'met,' 'made,' 'mud.' 'The man made many marvellous mummies out of munched gammon, and magnificent moonbeams of

gummy ammonia for a premium on mashed mallows.' 'The meddlesome magistrate mixed an omniumgatherum of amalgamated medicinal myrtles, and the maltman circumambulated the Cimmerian hammock of the murmuring midshipman, mischievously mocking the mass of mouldy millet.' 'Mazzaroth the Median met Mordecai with Metheg-Ammah and Methusaleh in Mesopotamia, and the Midianitish monarch marched from Marah to Megiddo by Mizpah and Moriah.'

The letter *m* is silent before *n*, as in 'Mnason' and 'mnemonics.'

Beware of the trick, which is very prevalent, of detaching letters from the preceding word and attaching them to the succeeding one, as 'his cry moved me,' not 'his *crimoved* me.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'N'.

This has two sounds : its first as in 'nine.' 'The notorious ninny, negligent of the nobleman's enchantments, contaminates his nautical nondescript with antinomian nonsense.' 'Ninety-nine manikins unanimously enchain with winning tones the benign Duenna at the Socinian Convention of the non-residents.' 'He knows his nose. I know he knows his nose; and if he says he knows I know he knows his nose, of course he knows I know he knows his nose.'

The second sound of *n* is that of *ng* before hard *g*, and often before *c*, *k*, and *q*. 'The Bank conquers the strangling donkey, and sanctions the lank conclave in the punctilious concourse.' 'The sanguine uncle lingers long among the tinkling ingots, and jingles his wrinkled fingers over the linguist's angular shrunk shank.'

The union of *ng* at the end of words is very frequent, as in ‘cultivating* and strengthening the understanding by reading, writing, and ciphering.’ ‘I am thinking of contending on the hustings.’ ‘Relinquish your standing in the crisping frying-pan, by jumping over the winding railing; and while you are laughing, crying, sleeping, waking, resting, or working, you may be sailing on the swelling, boiling ocean, where the limping herrings are leaping, skipping, and dancing around.’

NOTE—Of all the slovenly styles of reading and speaking, there is none worse than the habit of dropping the *g* at the end of words, and saying ‘good-mornin’, ‘good-evenin’, ‘I’m makin’ a stunnin’ puddin’, and so forth. Thus, the omission of one letter is enough to turn the best of reading and speaking into the worst vulgarity. Truly, as I have said in a former chapter, ‘there is no such thing as a trifle.’

SOUND OF CONSONANT ‘P.’

This has but one sound. ‘Pap,’ ‘pale,’ ‘par,’ ‘pall,’ ‘peep,’ ‘pet,’ ‘pipe,’ ‘pip,’ ‘pope,’ ‘pool,’ ‘pop,’ ‘pule,’ ‘pup,’ ‘puss,’ ‘point,’ ‘pound.’ ‘People put pepper in apple-pies in cupboards and whapping wrappers.’ ‘The happy piper placed his peerless puppy in Pompey’s pears, to be purchased for a pound of pippins or pulverized poppies.’ ‘A paddy picked a peck of pickled peppers, and put them on a pewter platter.’

The letter *p* is silent in ‘psalm,’ ‘psalter,’ ‘pshaw,’ ‘Ptolemy,’ ‘Psyche,’ ‘corps,’ ‘corpse’ (corse), ‘receipt.’

* The student will not fail to note the distinction between the sounds of *ng* in such words as ‘singer,’ and ‘linge.’

Beware of saying 'debths' instead of 'depths,' or 'babtism' instead of 'baptism.'

The following may be called a muscle-stretcher : 'Peter Prickle Prandle picked a peck of prickly prangly pears from the prickly prangly pear-tree; if, then, Peter Prickle Prangle picked a peck of prickly prangly pears from the prickly prangly pear-tree, where is the peck of prickly prangly pears that Peter Prickle Prandle picked from the prickly prangly pear-tree ? Success to the successful picker of prickly prangly pears.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'R'.

This has two sounds. The first is the soft sound, as in 'arm' : 'The barbers were arbiters of the murderers of their forefathers.' 'The Tartars are garblers of errors, and perverters of the hardware of North Norwich.' 'The farmers are dire searchers after burnt arbors, and store the corners of their larders with roots.' 'Charles Barnard in the farther barn brings larger ears of corn for the carter's horses.'

Avoid omitting this letter, as it is never silent, except when doubled in the same syllable, as 'bar,' 'barred'; 'occur,' 'occurred.' Here the second *r* is silent. Do not say 'stawmy,' but 'stormy'; not 'wawm,' but 'warm'; not 'bust,' but 'burst'; not 'hawses,' but 'horses.'

In some cases the letter *r* has almost a reverberation in utterance, as 'ring,' 'roll'; and it is good practice for the student to roll the *r*, with the tongue against the roof of the mouth, *rapidly*, as in 'r-r-ring' 'r-r-r-roll,' 'r-r-r-r-right.'

The second sound of *r* is rough, as in 'railroad.' 'The roaring reprobate reverberates his rancorous ribaldry, and

retreats from his rival's regal ranch to his recreation in the rookery.' 'The librarian recreantly hurled the grimy gridiron into the crockery with reproach and effrontery, the result of which was romantic dreams, broken ribs, and tremendous citrons for the crying children.' 'The ragged rascal drags the rhinoceros round and round the rugged rocks; while a rabid rat from a rat-trap ran through the rain on a rickety rail with a raw, red rhadamanthus.'

Demosthenes, in the early part of his career, was reproached with not being able to pronounce correctly the first letter of his favourite art—Rhetoric.

The student can, by practice, roll or trill the letter *r* (as Demosthenes learned to do), by writing out for himself exercises on the use of the letter, such as 'Rise, rise; ring the alarum; strike, strike, strike !'

Here is another muscle-stretcher : 'The riven rocks are rudely rent, and rifted trees rush rapidly round and round the rivers, while hoary Boreas rends the robes of Spring, and rattling thunders roar around the rocky region.' 'Robert Rowley rolled a round roll round, and if Robert Rowley rolled a round roll round, where is the round roll Robert Rowley rolled round?'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'S'.

This has two sounds; the first is very similar to the first sound of *c* (see Chapter XXI.). Thus 'cide' and 'side' are identical in sound :

'The precise Sallust starts on stilts, and assists the universe for conscience' sake; he splits base brass, and subsists on sea-salmon.' 'Solon boasts he sought the magistrates, and twists the sticks to suit the soldiers and

sailors.' 'The strong mastiff stood still in the narrowest streets of Syracuse.' 'Sesostris still struts, and persists that six Swiss ships are sunk.'

'Seven swimming swans swam over the stormy stream. Well swum seven swimming swans. So seven swimming swans swam back over the stormy stream. Well swum seven swimming swans.' 'Sam Slick sawed six sleek, slim, slippery side-saplings. Where are the six sleek, slimy, slippery side-saplings Sam Slick sawed ?'

The other sound of *s* is similar to *z* or *zh*, and to the soft French *c* sound. 'The azure adhesion to the ambrosial enclosure is a roseate treasure of visions of pleasures.' 'The vizier's enthusiasm seizes the glazier's divisional diversions of scissors.' 'The hosier takes the brasier's crosier with abrasions and corrosions, illusions and elisions.'

Never allow combinations of letters to drop, which ought all to be distinctly heard, as 'mists,' 'thrusts,' 'fists,' 'ghosts,' 'insists,' 'posts,' 'hosts,' 'costs,' 'bursts.' Do not allow the teeth to remain an instant together after the sound is made and the word is finished.

* * * * *

Why do I take the student through these voice-exercises ? Because God, the Master Architect of the body, has so constituted the powers of the voice that they can grow only by action. Every man must, therefore, educate himself. Teachers are but helps; the work is his own. He who really takes the time and trouble to use these voice exercises will reach a fulness, clearness, strength, smoothness, and ringing quality of voice rarely heard among ordinary speakers.

By Fulness of voice, I mean richness.

By Clearness—freedom from nasal sound.

By Strength—sufficient audibility.

By Smoothness—freedom from jerkiness and harshness.

By a Ringing quality of voice—that reverberation which causes it to carry down any building.

The best servant is not the one who has been shown how to scrub, and darn, and bake, but who has learned, by practice, to *do* these things. The best archer is not the one that has the strongest bow, but he who, by practice, has taught himself to bend it. As reasonably might we expect a pupil in music to improve in singing by *silently* studying the notes, as that a pupil in reading our mother-tongue should gain distinctness of pronunciation, clearness of enunciation, and sweetness of intonation, without that steady practice which is found indispensably necessary in all other fields of study.

CHAPTER XXIII.

VOICE EXERCISES (*concluded*).

‘To arrive at perfection in the art of reading requires much time and pains.’—

SHERIDAN.

IF half the time that is spent over the pen was devoted to learning our language, we might be inferior writers, but we should be far better speakers. Good public reading and speaking is one of the rarest qualities to be found in a country where reading and speaking are almost as frequent and necessary as breathing the air. Worse than this, we suffer from the heredity of bad reading and speaking, which, like other vices, is handed down from parents to children.

Faults contracted in childhood gain strength by habit, and become so inveterate by time as to be almost incurable. Hence, mothers should teach their children to pronounce correctly when first learning to speak; but some, as far from endeavouring to correct them, encourage them in ‘baby talk,’ and forget that they are helping to cultivate a vicious style of speaking. If, on being shown the smallness of feet in the women of China, we were not aware of the cause, we should conclude that it was a defect or deformity of Nature. But when we are told that the feet are bound up from earliest childhood, in the tightest bandages, to prevent

their growth, we wonder at the folly of a nation that can persevere in so cruel a system.

If it can be shown that we are mentally crippled from early childhood from the want of being taught how to speak our mother tongue, it must be obvious that any of us who can further, in any way, the study of good speaking are benefactors of our race. It is not too much to say that a vicious articulation, caught, perhaps from a nurse, or some other servant, often infects a man's speech through life. On the other hand, when we reflect that many a man, by the mere force of cultivating the gift of language, born in him—so far as he can carry it out by his own pains—has raised himself to the sole direction of affairs in this country, we feel that the living voice is the greatest power we can wield to move the human heart.

I proceed now to conclude our voice exercises.

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'T'.

This has one clear, short sound, made by a sharp blow of the tongue against the roof of the mouth, as, 'ta,' 'te,' 'ti,' 'tow,' 'too.' 'A Titan took a tattling, tempting, tell-tale termagant, with tattered tassels; and a Tartar tittered at the tottering towers.' 'Titus took a turtle and tossed it into the turbid Thames, which touched the tip of his toes ten times, till every tittle of him tingled, while the tin tongs tinkled, and Tertullus told Tiberius Tertius to tear the tall Templar to tatters.'

'When a twister a-twisting will twist him a twist
For twisting his twist he three twines doth entwist;
But if one of the twines of the twist do untwist,
The twine that untwisteth still twisteth the twist.'

T is silent in 'christen,' 'fasten,' 'often,' 'castle,' 'soften,' 'whistle,' 'chasten,' 'nestle,' 'mortgage,' 'chesnut,' 'misletoe,' 'thisle.'

Beware of chewing your words, as, 'virchu' for 'virtue,' 'nachure' for 'nature,' 'righchus' for 'righteous.'

Th when combined loses the sharp sound of *t* for one softened, which is produced by the very tip of the tongue between the upper front teeth : as 'thin,' 'a thief thirsting for thankless thefts thought three thriftless atheists thrust him by the throat, throwing things on the threshold, and thunder thrilled through the throne.' 'Father, mother, and brother throng to smooth the scythe, to cut the laths on the hearth.'

This may be called the diphthongal sound of *th*. 'Theophilus Thistler, the thistle-sifter, in sifting a sievelful of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb; if, then, Theophilus Thistler, the successful thistle-sifter, in sifting a sieve of unsifted thistles, thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb, see that thou, in sifting a sievelful of unsifted thistles, thrustest not three thousand thistles through the thick of thy thumb. Happy Theophilus Thistler, who thrustedst not three thousand unsifted thistles into thy throat.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'V'.

This has one sound, and is produced by laying the upper front teeth on the lower lip, as 'Victoria.' 'The vain Venus, a vestal virgin, vaunts her shivering voice with vivid vivacity, and a volatile vicious vagabond vents his villainous vengeance vehemently on Vashti, who was vexed with the

venomous viper visible on the vine and the violent vulture visiting the vineyard, in the void, vacant valley, viewed from the village.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'W'.

This has one sound, as 'wa,' 'we,' 'wi,' 'wo,' 'woo,' 'wow.' 'A wanton wag, with woful words, bewailed the well-wisher of the women in the wigwam.' 'The dwarf dwelling in the weary west weaves well the warp and woof, walking within winter walls, where winds wail and wander in the waste wilderness, and the water-witch warbles her watchword to the weather-wise workman, and rewards the wicked watch-maker with winnowed wormwood, wondrously woven with twisted wire.' 'Who a watch would wear must pocket his watch and watch his pocket.'

Wh when combined have one sound, which must be aspirated, but no so strongly as to be harsh, as 'when,' 'what,' 'why?' 'When are whetstones found in whirlpools, and whip-lashes in whirlwinds?' 'While the whimsical whistler, whispering, wheedles the white whipped wheels of the whig; and the whimpering whining whelp on the whirl-i-gig was overwhelmed by the wheelbarrow.'

W at the end of a word is silent, as 'new,' 'how,' 'now,' 'bow-wow,' 'blow,' 'know.' It is also silent in 'sword,' 'two,' 'answer'; and also before the letter *r*, as 'wrap,' 'wrack,' 'wreck,' 'wrath,' 'wreathe,' 'wrist,' 'wrong.'

SOUND OF CONSONANT 'X'.

This has two sounds, the first, as in 'axe,' where the sound is very similar to *ks* (*aks*). 'The coxcomb experiences

the luxury of expatiating on the excessive hexagon, being anxious to explain the orthodoxy and heterodoxy of Hexagonus; the expositor exposes the exploit of expecting to explain excellent texts.'

Play upon 'x'es (the letter *e* is omitted) : 'The x-king was xtravagantly xtoll'd, but xceedingly xecrated. He xperienced xtraordinary xcclence in xigencies. He was xcclent in xternals, but xtrinsic in xtasy; he was xtreme in xcitement, and xtraordinary in xtempore xpression. He was xpatriated for his xcresses, and to xpiate his xtravagance was xclud'd, and died in xile.'

The second sound of *x* is soft, as 'exist' (as if spelled 'eggsist'). 'The exhorter was exhausted by his exuberant exordium, and was exonerated from examining the executioner.' 'The exaggerations of the auxiliary exhibit the exaltation of the exemplary exile who existed on exotics.'

It will be perceived the *x* always requires a vowel to precede it, except in proper names, as 'Xerxes,' 'Xantippe,' 'Xanthus,' 'Xenophon.'

SOUND OF 'Y' WHEN A CONSONANT.

This has one soft sound :

'The young yearling yelled for the yellow yolk yesterday, and yearned over the year-book in the yard.' 'The yawning yeoman yielded the yeast yesternight.' 'You yoked it, though young, to yonder yoke, yea, in years of youth.'

SOUNDS OF CONSONANT 'Z'.

This has very much the sound of *s*, but softer, and also the sound of *x*; so that words may be combined which show that the sound of *z*, *s*, and *x* are almost the same : 'Zerubbabel, zealous for Zion and Zoar, where zephyrs breathe resonant music, resigns the isolated houses of Islam.' 'The puzzler puzzles his brains with nasal pains, buzzes among the trees as he pleases, and resumes the zigzag gizzards of lizards with dissolving huzzas.' 'Xerxes absolves the grizly President, and Zanthus in disguise disadains Zenophon.'*

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We have now carefully gone through all the consonants' sounds, and to each one I have appended appropriate voice exercises, both for close observation and for daily practice. Each student can further frame similar exercises on all the consonants for his own practice. I advise every student to make and keep a list of what he is conscious (or friends have told him) are his defects or peculiarities in speaking, and to practise daily to overcome them, especially in cases needing distinct articulation, and never to rest satisfied until he can perceive in himself some progress towards perfection : for all true principles of good speaking are unchanging, and should be continually developing themselves in our improvement.

* I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Bronson in these consonant exercises.

In closing these voice exercises on the consonants, I append a few muscle-stretchers :

- (1) 'Thou wreath'd'st and muzzld'st the farfetched ox, and imprison'd'st him, after thou prob'd'st, trifi'd'st, quick'n'd'st, wagg'd'st, and thrust'd'st over his rack'd ribs the pop-o-cat-a-co-ti-pax-u-barb'd shafts ^{that} thou curs'd'st.'
- (2) 'Thou waft'd'st the rickety skiff, and reef'd'st the haggled, strongest, storm-struck sails of the shipwrecked vessel on the rock-bound coast of Kamtschatka.' 'He was an unamiable, disrespectful, incommunicative, disingenuous, formidable, unmanageable, intolerable, and pusillanimous curmudgeon.'
- (3) 'His dis-in-ter-est-ed-ness and in-tel-li-gi-bil-i-ty are absolutely in-ex-pli-ca-ble.' 'I un-hes-i-ta-ting-ly say that the un-rea-son-able-ness of that eg-o-ist's scheme is an ir-re-fra-ga-ble proof of his lat-i-tu-di-na-ri-an-ism.' 'He spoke com-mu-ni-ca-tive-ly of his in-dis-so-lu-ble slov-en-li-ness, which he hi-e-ro-glyph-i-cal-ly and per-emp-to-ri-ly insisted was an-ti-pest-i-lent-i-al and in-con-tro-vert-i-bly con-grat-u-la-to-ry.'

The voice practice of all these exercises is to the speaker exactly what daily vocal exercises are to the singer; and I can assure every speaker, from a long experience myself as a learner, that vocal exercises daily are not more necessary to the singer than voice exercises are to the speaker.

In making use of these voice exercises (and in the use of others which the student may frame for himself), he

should be careful to concentrate the voice with absolute distinctness on the accented syllable or letters.

As an illustration of what I mean by leaning the voice on the accented syllable, here is an instance in which a clergyman, by an incorrect pronunciation of a single syllable, completely perverted the sense of a passage. It was : 'He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him.' Instead of thus reading it, he perverted it, by a slovenly pronunciation, into : 'He that feareth God, and worketh righteous-ness is *excepted* of Him' (that is, left out, or excluded).

The following will show every student the importance in each case of distinguishing every syllable by its right pronunciation :

(a) 'Being confident of his confidant, the personage called at the parsonage.' 'The radish pendant looked reddish, and was pendent from the hand of the baron, whose fields were barren.' 'His salary was celery, and he lived in the capital of the county, just under the Capitol, opposite the office which was apposite to his purpose.'

(b) 'The pre-contract pre-contracts the prefix which is prefixed to the present he presents.' 'The produce of the land was such as to produce a project against the man who projects his protest, which he protests against the rebel who rebels.' 'I refuse the refuse, or to record the record, or to retail either by whole-sale or retail.'

The principles of elocution are few and simple, but the practice which makes perfect is varied, manifold, and, I will add, life-long. Let every example be thoroughly mastered, and often review what you have previously

studied and read, and you will discover that fresh beauties, which were hidden from you yesterday, are to be found on every page to-day.

Aim at reaching what was said of one of the greatest preachers. When Baron, the actor, came away after hearing one of Massillon's sermons, he said to one of his friends of the stage who had accompanied him : 'Here is an orator; we are only actors.'

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

‘In language, the tongue is more pliant in youth than afterwards.’—

LORD BACON.

THERE are three different modes in which we may read and speak, only two of which, under any circumstances, can be right.

The first is reading and speaking by word, without any regard to the sentiment.

The second is reading and speaking only by word and thought.

The third is reading and speaking by word, thought, and feeling, all combined and all brought into play.

In almost all schools, the first of these only is taught—reading mechanically—hence very few pupils have any conception of the meaning of the words, or of the subject-matter which they are called to read. When we read without any feeling, we are inclined to speak on one note of the voice only, in a monotone; when there is a moderate degree of feeling, and we grow interested in the subject, the voice ranges from the second to the sixth notes; when there is the highest degree of feeling, and we are

intensely interested, it ranges from the fourth to the eighth notes.

The pitch of the voice is most important. The voice should not often be raised to the eighth note, lest it should become harsh; nor be dropped to the first note, for then the articulation may be indistinct. Both these extremes—like all extremes—should be carefully avoided. To be truly eloquent is to speak to the purpose. Perhaps a good definition of eloquence is that it is the art of speaking in such a manner as to attain the end for which we speak. Its object should always be to convince and persuade, and so to carry our hearers along with us.

The art of reading and speaking, which I have endeavoured to unfold, teaches us to manifest our feelings and thoughts to others by our words, in such a manner as to give them the true idea and expression of how we feel and what we think; and in so doing, to lead them to feel and think as we do. It is an art which, with all its refinement, belongs to no particular class to the exclusion of others; nor is it the gift of Nature alone; but, like other requirements, it is the reward that comes to arduous effort, under the guidance of good teaching (where this can be had). Excellence in this art is the work of time and labour, prompted by true feeling, and guided by correct thought.

It should begin in childhood; the first school is at a mother's knee. It is from her voice, her face, her gestures that education commences. The mother has the almost exclusive direction of the young during the most critical period of life—the first eight years. She can therefore impart to her child the first simple principles of speech; for under her teaching her child learns to speak.

Following this, one leading object in all our public schools should be to teach the science and art of reading and speaking. They ought to occupy seven-fold more time than at present. Teachers should feel that to them are committed the future speakers of our country. It is a melancholy reflection that children learn more bad habits than good ones, in speaking, at almost all schools.

I feel that, at the conclusion of these pages, my readers may say, 'Have you anything to propose as a remedy for the acknowledged defects of our nation in reading and speaking ?' This is a fair question to be put to anyone who undertakes to write on this most difficult art.

My reply is that any plan for national improvement in reading and speaking should be the joint product of the ablest authorities we could find in the educational world. The first step towards improvement should be the endowment of professorships at our Universities. This would inspire young men of culture and taste to devote themselves to their own language. By beginning at the Universities, we should work from the centre, and would reach the extremities. A council of the head-masters of our public schools should follow, whose ability and authority would give a sanction to what they proposed. If they were to draw up a well-digested scheme, approved by men of judgment and experience, it would at once awaken the interest of parents, and—perforce—commend itself to the heads of all preparatory schools throughout the country.

Of course the question would arise, Where are the competent men to be found who could teach the art of speaking ? But if you once create a want in any market of life, you will soon get a supply.

The history of most endowments is that they were the bequests of individuals; and, happily for England, such men are still found among us who leave large sums for religious and philanthropic uses. It was in this way the old endowments were provided; and in this way they will still be created in the future. I can believe there are rich men in our country who so feel the importance of this subject as to be ready to give money for such an object if it were taken up by those in authority. As a proof of this belief, I may mention that, many years ago, there was a gentleman who in a previous will had left a large sum of money to his University for the endowment of a professorship for the study of the English language, but in his last will it was omitted, for what reason was not known. Such professorship might be made tenable only for a certain number of years, so as to bring in new blood, and it would prove a strong inducement to young men to throw themselves into the study of our mother tongue.

Other and lesser methods of encouraging the study of our language would not be wanting. I am not acquainted with the usage of our public schools in general, but I know that at Harrow School prizes have been founded for the best readers, and for the best knowledge of Shakespeare. This is admirable; and from being myself (only as a friend) connected with this subject in Harrow School, I can testify to the keen interest the boys take in the subject of reading, and the really practical use it is to those who compete.

I venture to suggest that an occasional 'evening of recitations' from the poets and authors of our own country, given in our public schools, would do much to awaken the

dormant taste of our English boys, who are ready to take the keenest interest in good readings and recitations.

Oral teaching has a great advantage over teaching by the printed page. There is in the living speaker an attractive manner and winning softness which cannot be transcribed in print. The eye, the countenance, the tone of voice—these are often as eloquent as the words that are uttered. There is a language felt and understood by us all, which falls as softly as dew upon the tender grass, and wins its way into the innermost recesses of the heart.

Good teaching in our Universities and public schools would soon raise the standard of speaking and pronunciation in our English homes; and once our youths were trained in speaking, we should reach a standard of excellence so general that our clergy barristers, and members of Parliament would be models of good speaking, instead of, in too many instances, specimens of slipshod utterance.

I am quite aware that many people will not allow that good reading and speaking can be taught. Yet it was a prominent art and favourite study among the Greeks and Romans; and, surely, what has been in the past may be in the future.

Or our objectors may affirm : ‘It is Nature, not Art, that forms the orator.’ Certainly, Nature must be the prime mover; she must bestow the talents. But culture is required to bring those talents to perfection, or, at least, to improve them. So that, after all, much must be left to be accomplished by Art; and all Art must be taught—either by others or acquired by ourselves—until those who hear us can scarcely tell where Nature ends and Art begins.

For more than thirty years I have humbly striven, by readings for the people in the West of England,* by public readings for charity, by teaching students for Holy Orders, and by every means in my power, to advance the art of reading and speaking. I hail every sign of a growing interest in it; and I rejoice to see that at the annual meeting of the British Medical Association, held at Nottingham in 1893, a Memorial† was issued, and ordered to be sent out to public schools, the Universities, and other public bodies, on the use of the voice in reading, speaking, and singing, in the course of which it is observed that :

‘A large number of teachers are not themselves acquainted with the best method of using the voice, and are, therefore, not able to impart it to their pupils; while educational establishments in which boys are taught, and young men are trained for the Church, for the Bar, for teaching, etc., rarely profess to furnish any instruction in the use of the voice, and still more rarely carry out such instruction with the thoroughness they deserve.’

This is a step in the right direction, when the voice of Science is lifted up; and it further adds :

‘The Council of the British Medical Association venture to beg that you will take this matter into your grave consideration, and, either alone or in concert with the heads of other educational bodies, devise such means as may seem best fitted to remedy what appears to be a grave defect in the later education of many of our youth of both sexes.’

* See account of the Bath Penny Readings, by the Rev. James Fleming. Peach and Co., Bath.

† British Medical Association, 429, Strand, W. C.

I have thought it well, in my concluding words on the art of reading, not merely to commend the inimitable charm of melodious speaking, but to offer some practical suggestions for its improvement. Nothing would give me more pleasure than to assist in its development, and if anything I have written shall help towards this consummation, I shall be content to think it is some small contribution towards the more thorough and complete study of speech.

A large field presents itself to our future educationists, to fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, and to all the future teachers of our boys and girls throughout the land. When they shall enter upon it in earnest, and make our mother tongue as much a component part of education as other languages and studies are made now, a new era will dawn, leading to the highest culture of the living language by the living voice—the best of all instruments for convincing the judgment, kindling the feelings, and touching the heart.