

Such discover, almost by instinct, what others learn; and they belong to that class of minds who laid down the laws of language, and reduced writing and discourse to an art. On the other hand, many are grammarians, in the school-boy sense, who know very little of the philosophy of composition, and are but poor speakers and bunglers in literature. It may be farther observed that, by mixing in good society, many, without study, speak and write good English; and children brought up in educated circles often are more correct in ordinary conversation, than the majority of self-taught men. Though the literature of the latter should be without a blemish, in common discourse, they will frequently show that their youth lacked the polish of education. With public speakers, however, it is somewhat different, for they are as careful over their speech as the former are of their literature. I remember reading of a celebrated author of a Grammar who, himself, spoke wretched English.

Now these seeming paradoxes are easily explained. The fact is, we are living in a state of society where language is highly advanced, and literature and discourse widely diffused. Thus, we have an imperceptible training. We acquire by practice what the ancients attained by study and theory. In these days of cheap literature and extensive postal facilities, nearly every one reads at least a novel, and writes, at least a letter. And again, where is there an American or an Englishman who cannot make a speech? Indeed, the very character of the age tends to general knowledge and education. Hence, the semi-educated state of the masses; hence those mixing in good society may speak with propriety; and hence many can discourse and write for the public who have never studied rhetoric and composition. In fact those who belong to what is termed the uneducated mass, in general knowledge and intellectual acquirements, are far in advance even of the aristocracy of several centuries back. But let not this in the minds of any lessen the importance of treating literature and discourse as branches of a highly wrought art. Had we lived in earlier ages, what we now acquire by imperceptible training must have been reached by individual study. Hence, when language was in its infancy, literature not so widely diffused, and public speaking not so general, orators and writers studied the art of rhetoric and composition in a high degree.

The art of composition teaches us how to acquire the ability of speaking and writing effectively; it shows us how to use the capabilities and mix the elements of language, and discovers what makes the vast difference between the best speakers and writers and the bunglers in discourse and literature. If asked the reason of the eminence of certain men as orators and writers, many would ascribe it to their talent, their thinking powers, their fruitfulness of ideas, and their rich imaginations. They would say, the poet is eminent because he has the poet's gift; the orator powerful because he is an orator by nature, and the general literary man a writer because he has the talent for writing. Now this is only partly true. Reflect that the soul of genius must have a body to be seen and felt by others, thought a form to be tangible to their reason,—ay even to be tangible to our own reason, and imagination representative expressions to illustrate its ideal pictures. Nature's poets become eminent because they embody the soul of poetry in beautiful, or powerful, or sublime verse; orators great from the reason that they are great in the art, as well as in the talent of oratory, and general literary men successful, because literature is their profession or their idol. Excellence is obtained by theory or much practice, but as a rule by the combination of both.

Select a classical piece of literary composition or a masterly oration. Mark its clear passages; note its strong ones; observe those that are passionate or loaded with impetuous eloquence; wonder at their difference from passages eloquent with imagination; find all its beauties, grace, tenderness, pathos, ornament, and harmony. Having done so, learn one of the first lessons of the art of composition. It is this. The clear passages are so because clearly expressed; the strong ones strong because created with the elements of strength; the passionate such from their expressions of the storm and varieties of passion; the impetuous receive character from their impetuosity; the imaginative has been clothed in imagination's own dress; the graceful were gracefully executed; the pathetic show pathos embodied; the ornamental are decked with the ornaments of language, and the soul of harmony breathes in harmonious parts. Demosthenes is said of all orators to have been the most impetuous and powerful. Read his orations and you will find the essential elements of impetuosity and power there. Cicero was the most highly wrought and cunning master of oratory. Read his orations and you will discover elaborate art in his composition; and in later times, Crathorn and Brougham were giants in the English Parliament, because their speeches contained the intrinsic qualities of style ascribed to them as masters of oratory. Cicero gained his reputation, as a cunning artist of discourse, because he worked with a skillful hand and finely elaborated all he undertook. He never was effective without aiming for effect, never made a point unless he first sharpened it, nor reached the climax of splendid oration before he had prepared the way with consummate skill. Thus a great speaker or a great writer understands his art, and knows how to execute his work, and the masterly critic can

tell how he has executed it, and what elements constitute his beauties and effects.

In reading a fine piece of literary composition, or when hearing delivered a powerful or splendid discourse, the majority will be struck with their effects and beauties, without knowing the causes thereof. Yet there are the causes of those effects, and laws upon which those beauties depend. Powerful passages will move, clear ones convince, graceful ones please, beautiful ones enchant, touching ones draw forth our sympathies, impetuous ones carry us on with a torrent of feeling, or storm the mind with a host of ideas; those full of passion, or overflowing with pathos, will stir up kindred passions in others, or melt them into tears, while harmonious passages will strike upon the ear like strains of exquisite music. Now the master of composition observes these laws, and lays them down as some of the rudiments of his art. Moreover, he understands what elements constitute these varieties, and knows how to execute his work, and the instruments to use in the constitution of its parts. Like a skillful mechanic, in the production of a finely wrought piece of mechanism, so is the classical author in the composition of an excellent work. Yet how few realize this resemblance! For instance, if the finely wrought piece of mechanism be examined, it will be said, what time, what labor, what care, and what knowledge of the mechanical art, combined with the mechanic's skill, it must have taken to have produced that work; but if the excellent piece of literature be examined they will exclaim—What a fine writer! The labor, care, knowledge of the laws of art, critical judgment, refined taste and elaborate design displayed by the author only few appreciate. Yet the fact is, there are classical compositions that cost more labor, time, care, skill, and knowledge of artistic laws than any other works of art. But the toiling author is merely credited with talent. This is a most unjust balance of his account. That splendid literary work of his which one reads in a few nights, exhausted his time and labor of years. And this, too, is independent of the years of training and study which were required to prepare him for his work, and over and above his native genius. I bring these views before you to correct the common notion that talent is nearly all that is required to make a writer or a public speaker. My opinion is that talent, unaccompanied with much labor and a knowledge of the laws of the art of composition, often make poor writers and very indifferent public speakers. The reason of this is that they depend, too often, entirely upon their talent. I would impress upon young men who desire eminence, either as public speakers or writers, the importance of becoming masters in the art of composition, and the necessity of spending much labor and thought, both upon the subject and execution of their designs. Without this eminence cannot be reached, no matter howsoever much desired.

To the non-critical reader nine-tenths of the beauties and excellence of fine composition are lost. A classical author would much rather that his works should be placed in the hands of a master of literary art than consigned to the judgment of an incompetent amateur; but it is most distasteful to him to be read by those who know nothing of the laws of composition, and who are as incapable of appreciating his merits, as of discovering his defects. On the other hand, he commends his works to the review of a just and competent critic, with feelings of gratitude and pride. From such a reviewer, his merits will receive discriminating praise; and, even should his work be pronounced "not perfect," this judicious praise will be more flattering to him than the senseless applause of the ignorant.

Moreover, those who are unacquainted with the art of composition, not only are incapable of appreciating finely-executed works of others; but, if they attempt literature themselves, they will rank as bunglers. Even authors of genius will, in their first productions, break the laws of composition and offend critical taste, unless they possess the skill of good preparatory training. Indeed, they are almost certain to do this, unless they also compose with care, and bestow upon their manuscript much labor and revision. In fact, even experienced writers, in producing classical works, find it necessary to write with elaborate care, and to give to their composition much labor and revision. How much more necessary is it, therefore, that young writers should be thoughtful, careful and laborious in their first literary efforts?

Upon the point of breaking classical laws of composition, it may be observed that modern novelists are particularly subject to critical censure; and modern dramatists of the minor school are also equally defective. I have often observed this, without making critical notes of the examples. Two instances, however, I will refer to of popular writers breaking the law of episode most remarkably. I may here be observed that episode belongs to the higher branches of the art of composition.

Here the lecturer stated the examples, and then made a passing touch upon public speakers, illustrative of the necessity of much training for eminence. He said that, in modern times, literary men and great thinkers were seldom orators, and related the anecdote of Addison's ludicrous effort to deliver a speech in the English Parliament. Upon this he remarked:

From such examples, it is inferred that great writers and profound thinkers are nat-

urally unqualified for public speaking. To this superficial notion I take exception, and consider them eminently endowed with the qualities necessary to make orators of the highest order. Were they equally trained to think aloud, before a public assembly, as they are to think upon paper, they would be similarly successful; and because they are not thus trained, they fail. Indeed, I am of opinion that the majority of modern public speakers are not Nature's orators, and that those sons of genius who, like Addison, shrink from a public assembly, with chaos and confusion in their brains, to vindicate with their pens the richness and profusion of their minds, are in truth the nearest relations of that constellation of orators, whose names are written upon the pillars of discourse. Let literature as a profession be cut off from them—let the irresistibility of their genius force a vent in public speech—let ambition for distinction spur them on, and a solid training support them, and they will prove that relation and write on those pillars new blazing names. In ancient Greece and Rome, when oratory was the medium through which men courted popularity and success in every public sphere, not only writers and lawgivers of philosophy were orators, but military men also mourned the forum to advance their fortunes. Cæsar was not only one of the world's greatest generals, but he was also an accomplished orator and an eminent writer, while Cicero, the great Roman lawyer, was an author of celebrated works on rhetoric and literary composition. The first essay of Demosthenes, in public speaking, was scarcely less a failure than Addison's in the English Parliament. Had he lived in modern times, when literature has become a ruling institution, after his failure before a popular assembly, he might have aimed for the empire of the press, and the world perchance might then have known him, not as its greatest orator, but as the first editor and origin of the London Times. But he was born when oratory was the ruling institution, and, in spite of his non-success at first, and the disadvantages of physical defects, he won from all ages the undisputed throne and sceptre of the empire of discourse. These facts go to show that both oratory and literature are branches of a profession, and that much training and labor, as well as talent, are necessary for eminence in either branch.

Let me now return with my hearers from our view of public speakers and writers to the art of composition as the basis of their profession. When I assert that literature and discourse embrace the elements of all other arts, some may think that I am extravagant; yet it is the simple truth. View that most complicated and massive piece of machinery—let it be the masterpiece of human mechanism. Now count the number of its parts; then mark its fine and skillful construction, and lastly wonder at its fitness and perfection as an organized whole. Go then to the master of composition and ask him concerning the machinery of his art. He will tell you that some of its classical works have more parts than that mechanical specimen, and that they require a finer skill in construction, and a higher creative mind to design and organize the whole than does that masterpiece of physical mechanism. In this class of literature rank well-executed novels, good histories, works on rhetoric and composition, dramatic poetry of the higher order, and the epic poem. Of all literary works the epic contains the most complicated and massive machinery; and when it is known that Homer's Iliad contains between fifteen and twenty thousand lines, and that the work took Pope five years to translate, it will be seen at a glance that such a poem must be of a most complicated and extensive character. I will here observe that the term machinery is used by all rhetoricians and lawgivers of literature, and particularly applied to the class of works in question. The machinery of the epic embraces as many as four kinds; namely, the mathematical, the metaphysical, the human and the celestial. Let us now pass on to the harmony of literature.

The art of composition also embraces the fundamental laws of harmony, and almost the whole of its philosophy. To give a popular illustration of this, let a good elocutionist, with a rich voice, deliver a fine piece of dramatic composition, and a similar effect will be produced on the ear as that experienced at the singing of delightful music by a first-class vocalist. Is the reason of this merely because it is delivered by a masterly elocutionist with a rich modulated voice? Certainly not; the harmony of that literary composition is no more to be credited to the one who delivers it, than is a fine musical part to the singer who executes it. The truth is, that the literary composer, like the musical composer, has put the soul of harmony in his work; and in the one case the elocutionist brings it out, in the other the singer does the same. To the harmony of writing and discourse, the Grecian and Roman masters of rhetoric and composition assigned a principal branch of their art; but in a single lecture one can scarcely do more than give to it a passing illustration.

Touching the art of painting, let me ask, does not the descriptive writer paint in language landscapes as natural, striking, and highly colored, as ever put on canvas? Will he not bring scenes before the reader almost rivaling paradise itself? Has he not pictured others of awful grandeur, and made even hell's "darkness visible"? Can he not lift you up to admire and revel in happy scenes, or cast you down with sickness and loathing from the objects he presents? Is he not a portrait

painter? Is he not an historical painter? In fine, what has he not done with the pen that can be done with the brush? The pen has given to the world more painting than the brush can ever give. Were this a generation of artists, they could not in their life time put upon the canvas the scenes and pictures which writers have painted in language upon paper. Nay, the capabilities of their art itself will not take in as much. Thus we see illustrated the infinite powers of language, and the supremacy of literature and discourse in the empire of art.

The lecturer then stated the laws of organization, unity and development, as forming the principal branches of the art of composition, and illustrated the subject by diagrams, concluding his lecture by a critique on Gov. Harding's Thanksgiving Proclamation, which undoubtedly was more amusing to his hearers, than it would be instructing to our readers.

EXPLOITS OF THE ALABAMA.

Notwithstanding the efforts which have been made by the Navy Department to find and capture the Confederate steamer, Alabama, which has been for months capturing American merchant vessels to an alarming extent on the Atlantic Ocean, she had not, up to latest dates, been met with by any of the powerful steamships sent in search of her, for the purpose of "blowing her out of the water," but was still pursuing her piratical career, uninterrupted by the Federal fleet, which, from some cause, has been thus far searching for the destitute craft where she was not. She has been seen, as reported, within the last two months in various places, oftener in the vicinity of the West India Islands than elsewhere, evidently ever on the alert looking out for the most valuable prizes, and to keep out of the way of the ships of war desiring to make her acquaintance.

The belief has often been expressed that the treasure shipped from San Francisco to New York by the Isthmus was not very safe, and that the Alabama would doubtless make an effort to capture the steamers carrying the treasure and the mail, if no measures were taken to prevent such capture, but so far as known, no protection has been extended in the premises, and no ships of war have been in the Gulf of Mexico to protect American commerce for months, excepting such as have been engaged in blockading the ports of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas, and in the conveyance of troops and munitions of war. In consequence of the inattention of the government to a subject of so much importance, the steamer Ariel was captured on Dec. 7th, by the Alabama, while on her way from New York to Aspinwall, near the east end of Cuba—the particulars of which have not transpired.

After taking from the captured packet what he desired, Capt. Semmes, of the Alabama, let the Ariel proceed on her way as per report. Since her return, on application of Mr. Latham, the armed steamer Connecticut has been ordered to proceed to Aspinwall, to bring what treasure there might be there to New York.

The next heard from the far famed "290," he will in all probability be in other waters, while search is being made for her in the Gulf. She is emphatically an ubiquitous craft, and a great annoyance to American commerce.

THEATRE.—"Old Phil's Birthday" was played to good houses on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Mr. Clawson's personification of honest Old Phil gave great satisfaction. Dunbar's song "Yankee Manufactures," was enthusiastically received on the second evening, and the "Two Polts"—Margetts and Bowring—was finely played the second evening and made an excellent afterpiece.

For this evening, the management announces "The Charcoal Burner,"—a drama, which was presented with much favor last season. The fine scenery and superb music of the play are themselves sufficient to fill the house. We expect to see a crowd. The afterpiece, "Simpson and Co.," is a good farce.

THE HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES.—So far as our knowledge extends there was a very general observance by the citizens of Deseret, of Christmas and New Year's; and the joyousness of the people on those days was manifested in such a way and manner as they severally considered appropriate, and in accordance with the time-honored customs of their fathers, in a quiet, peaceable, orderly manner, drunkenness and rowdiness being no part of the ceremonies.