

"Oratory; Its Development
and Influence."

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- Outline -

A. - Early historical sketch.

a Ancient

1. Prehistoric evidence of early oratory
2. Development under Greek
- and Roman civilization.

b Medieval

- 1 Preceding & following the Crusades.
- 2 Oratory of The Renaissance.
- 3 Oratory of The Restoration.

c Modern

1. Preceding & following the French Revolution.
2. Birth of Oratory in America
3. Antislavery Orators.
4. Antislavery Orators.
5. Present-day Orators

B. - Oratory - as a means of enlightenment.

a Preceding The Christian Era.

b During The Christian Era

1. Early Apostolic teaching.
2. Dark ages.
3. Modern evangelistic Oratory.

Among the traits which distinguish man from lower organised life that of conveying thought by means of articulate speech stands foremost. Scientists can not say with certainty that lower animals do not have an action of the brain corresponding to that. But all scientific investigation has failed to prove that animals of lower order have an articulate language.

Man alone is gifted with this mighty power.

From the earliest historic time, we find man influencing man by means of speech. Although physical strength & valor were valuable requisites of political power a cunning brain & ready tongue were no less important factors.

Tradition, antedating history, though enveloped in a haze of mystery, brings to us records of eloquence & oratory, although

known as the monuments which mark the simple grandeur of primitive that, were doubtless far more potent in forming their simple political relations than any efforts of modern time.

The savage Indian of America rose to his place as councillor and brave as by his skill of speech as by his valor in battle or physical endurance. The Indian boy from earliest childhood is trained in the art of convincing his fellows by plain simple speech.

All the tribes of northern Europe were held together by close blood relationships & skill in the art of speech making. Norman writers describe the councils held by the Galls as great meetings free to all who wished to engage in the debates.

As far as the Greeks surpassed their neighbors in art & learning they surpassed them very little in the art of speech making; for eloquence,

as we have stated is one of the primitive accessories of mankind and no amount of polishing will make eloquence of that which is trivial.

If we wish to go to the cradle of Greek^d & Roman oratory, we must seek the sunny Isle of Sicily. While Hiero ruled over the city of Syracuse he carefully protected men of letters & art. Pindar came to seek for his dramatists - and among them Archylus, Pidas, Epicharmus and Saphron. Hiero made every effort to usher in a golden age of art and literature. The tyrant who had held sway before him had taken from the people their lands and given them to his friends.

Hiero made haste to remedy this evil by establishing the court of justice, before which the people could go - discrib their property, make their plea - and recover what was theirs. This public speech making brought to view all the defects of common speech for use in public

address. It is then that a bright young man, Corax, attempted to assist the rightful claimants in presenting their cases by collecting evidence and composing speeches fit for public presentation; and along with this he gave the people instruction in delivery. Thus we find oratory in its first development as an artificial art.

Professional speech writing soon became established throughout all Greece, and it grew in perfection and power until we have a fitting climax in Demosthenes, who has never been surpassed. Demosthenes was one of the group of Attic orators, among which are numbered Isocrates and Diodotus.

Roman oratory received its greatest inspiration in the schools of Rhetoric, and doubtless its strongest impulse during the waning of the republic. Cicero was its greatest orator.

At the fall of the Roman empire, it

seemed that the lights of the nation were suddenly extinguished by a flood of ignorance and corruption. Political oratory was degraded into the vilest harangues. The only sparks in the intellectual darkness were the eloquent appeals of the martyrs saints before they were led to execution. But this did not mean the death of learning entirely. Soon a poor, deformed, physical wreck appeared before the world, named, Peter the Hermit. After making two pilgrimages to the Holy City, he was so wrought up at the treatment that the Christians in their pilgrimages received from the Saracens, that he went thru out all Europe, preaching the holy Crusades, and by his intense eloquence, caused the whole of Europe to rise up to retake the Holy City from the infidels.

Bernard was doubtless the most eloquent and learned preacher of the dark ages. Receiving the blessing of Pope Gregory Third,

steeped in holy fire, he went forth to preach the second Crusade and so successful was he, that Europe resounded for a second time with the clash of arms and tramp of soldiers as the united armies of all the great nations were on their way to the Holy Land.

The last and greatest light of Mediaeval times was Savonarola, coming onto the scene just as the revival of learning was gaining sway thru Europe. He found adequate material for his great genius. Savonarola was educated in a monastery and was a great student of the Bible. He was sent to Ferrara, his native town in Italy, but his fellow townsman cared little for his preaching, and to avoid the alarm of war, he was transferred to Florence, but the city being in the height of its splendor, art and literature, cared nothing for the plain speaking of Savonarola. Deserting his church, because

of smooth tongued sophists around him he occupied other pulpits of the city. Thus, Savonarola when he came to his senses smarting under the humiliation, was forced to a less important town. In the meantime, great changes were going on. Italy, the Medici, passed from the control of Florence, and a reign of confusion took place. The people remembered Savonarola's predictions and recalled him to the chief church in the city flocking to hear him by thousands, and thus encouraged he became the most noted preacher in all Europe.

The revival of learning had quickened the intellect of Europe. Great thoughts were agitating the thoughts of men. The church did not lag far behind. Martin Luther of Germany and John Wycliffe of England wrought by their matchless eloquence a transformation in religion the equal of if not greater than that in

Luther and Wycliffe were both thorough masters of the art of forceable oratory and both were noted as pamphlet writers as well as orators.

Following them was a group including Hugh Latimer, John Knox and John Calvin. These with many others, by their eloquent appeals helped to usher in a new era for Christianity.

Coming now to the later part of the eighteenth century, we find great political changes being strongly advocated by eminent reformers. Paine and Lock were discussing natural philosophy. France was the first nation aroused to action by these appeals. For years unprincipled aristocracy had held sway until the flood gates of discontent were swept away like straw on a current and France was plunged in the whirl pool of anarchy. But above the confusion of voices one

could be heard, one steady and powerful and that was the voice of Marat, who by his powerful eloquence, held in check the bloody spirit of revolution until he poured out his life's blood on the guillotine; Then such men as Robespierre and Danton and Marat completed the awful work of the reign of terror.

But liberty had found a more secure cradle in a land untrodden by the iron hoof of war horse or crushed by the mailed gauntlet of European oppression. Little bands of liberty loving exiles ventured out upon the sea and found homes in America. Here peace and freedom reigned supreme, and soon an empire sprang up with liberty as its watchword and justice and equality, before the law, as its motto.

James Otis and Patrick Henry came upon the scene as mighty

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exponents for the cause of liberty and equality.

While the orators of the colonies were appealing in the most eloquent ~~tones~~ to the people in America to rise and assert their rights, liberty was not without its champions on the other side of the Atlantic. The Earl of Chatham, and Burke in the British Parliament sounded forth a warning which the English well might have heeded.

Sir William Pitt appears upon the scene of action in time to engage in the most furious debates with the indomitable O'Connell, while Fox with all of his good natured drillery gained right and left, engaging Pitt in strong debates.

Sheridan, the light and frivolous, arose to the dignity of a great orator very seldom but on these few occasions, he astonished his hearers beyond measure.

His speech on the impeachment of Warren Hastings is the most noted forensic effort in the English language. It like Burke enlivened the benches by his classical language, Sheridan amused and japed with his heaver. It was as man of iron, austere and grand, but Sheridan was a lover of pleasure, especially gambling. While this group of stars in English Parliament were working, a new school of orators was fast gaining ground in America. The eloquence of John Randolph, of Frank Pickens, Daniel Webster, John Calhoun and Henry Clay was prominent in the Congress of the United States. The questions which they discussed were of the greatest importance. The unity of a great nation was at stake, and history tells us how bravely they struggled against that power which was fast drawing the country into the vortex of internal

way are.

Frederick Phillips and Abraham Lincoln helped to roll up the tide of opposition to slave traffic. Charles Sumner we find working with all his might, and James Douglass, the smooth tongued lawyer, argued in the Senate ^{and} plead with the People; but all to no effect. Reason would not be heard; war must and did come. During the reconstruction period there was little speaking that rose to the dignity of oratory. There were many able debaters but few if any great orators.

The present day marks a great change in oratory in politics. The imaginative oratory has deserted the halls of state. Our speeches in Congress partake more of the nature of discursive talks and the advocating of strong sound public principle. Important economic questions are discussed with more or less

Power and energy of speech, but very little of the imaginative eloquence so appealing to the mind is used.

We find more true eloquence in the pulpit. Hoenes have, Moody, Talmage, Beecher and Spurgeon, men who have sounded the uttermost depths of human hearts. Then too the lecture platform claims many notable figures in the history of oratory such as Emerson, Frances E. Willard and scores of others.

The history of oratory marks the development of civilization. Each step in advance is marked by the outpouring floods of eloquence. In considering oratory in its relation to the spread of civilization our theme is almost without limit; but we must touch merely the stepping stones that lead to the present day.

The early Egyptian monuments abound in prayers and inscriptions which are written in oratorical style. They were prayers to the gods, and were doubtless delivered in the presence of the people, and the influence of these customs were doubtless far more important to the people than the gods themselves. There are many other evidences that oratory played an important part in early Egyptian times.

Few books were to be had and very few people could read; so the people were gathered together and taught the laws of the church and state, and doubtless many powerful speakers lived then.

Moses at one time when told to speak to the people objected because he had not the gift of oratory. This shows that it had received much attention at that time.

Doubtless the rise of Jewish

rule in Egypt was as much due to the oratory and eloquence of Aaron as to the laws and writings of Moses; and we know that the sons of Aaron were ordained priests forever, and they were doubtless a race of great preachers.

While the judges ruled, the people must have been held together by pure, strong, and simple eloquence. They must have been men capable of using strong, forceable language.

During the time of Kings, prophets raised their voices in dire warning and often wrought the multitudes to a state bordering on frenzy. John the Baptist by his powerful speech caused the people to hear whether they would or not. Isaiah stirred Jewish history to a depth almost unsurpassed. And at last when the humble Nazarine was heard on the shore of Gallilee

a new revelation burst upon the world. "Never man spoke as He. Men heard, but perceived not; saw but did not recognise. Such, was too much for the eyes of the world. It was as leading man from the dungeon into the bright sunlight. And the untimely, cruel death of Him who had done so much for them only spurred his followers on. Men spoke as they had never done before. The fearful sound of the Centurion's cry still reverberated along the corridors of time, finding an echo in ten thousand hearts and imparting a flame which spread throughout the world. St Paul thundered into the ears of Rome; Peter made the Mediterranean shore ring with his voice. And, bold, high banded men pushed forth into the wilderness and with clarion voices, strove to drive back the tide of ignorance and

vice. But the voice of the preacher grew fainter and fainter, drowned by the flood of dark sin and corruption. Only here and there could be heard a voice proclaiming the true gospel. Preachers became in a degree mere puppets for a degraded ignorant generation. But ere long they appear upon the scene great and powerful men; not powerful of body but of mind and soul. These we have discussed before and will but mention here. They were Peter, the Hermit and Bernard. Long and furious was their fight, but they succeeded in quelling to a degree the sin and vice.

Now a new era was ushered in. Martin Luther and the reformation burst upon the world. Martin Luther was not only a great writer but also a most courageous and eloquent orator. Thousands flocked to hear him, and his teaching held such sway

That the Pope with all his power
could not molest him.

In England we find Tyndale and
Crammer; in Scotland, John
Knox, and in France Calvin.

These monarchies went down
thrones tattered and fell. The
Church was shaken to its very
foundation. Every nation seemed
touched with a magic wand
of human sympathy. Wilberforce
pleaded with England for the liber-
ation of the blacks; John Foye for
more humane prisons and
prison laws; John Wesley
instilled in to the hearts of men
the Divine love and charity; Bunyan
spoke from the Bedford jail, and
Sturtevant could not find a
room large enough to contain
those who flocked to hear his
powerful preaching. A different
feeling crept into the breast of
man, a brotherly love that is now
bearing its precious fruit.

What has done most toward

clearing the world of one of the greatest blotches on the human race - drunkenness? Can you not hear the ^{voices} of such as John B.rough^{3d} & Francis Murphy in their eloquent pleading, in answer to your question?

It would be impossible to estimate the value for good of modern evangelistic work. A million orators from a million platforms every Sunday plead with the people in the sacred cause of religion, justice, and humanity. Did I say these were war orators? Yes orators in the truest sense. They should pour forth such a stream of eloquence that its influence shall broaden and broaden until man shall cease from strife and turmoil, and the golden dawn of the millennium shall rise and bathe the earth in resplendent grandeur.