

Graduating Thesis.

The Relation of Oratory to Literature.

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The Relation of Oratory to Literature.

I Literature.

1. As an Art.
2. Defined.
 - (a). Valuable thought,
 - (b). Well expressed.
3. Of knowledge,
Of power.
4. Scope of.
5. Substance.
6. As a means of culture.

II Oratory.

1. Defined.
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 - (b). Action - by persuasion.
3. Orator's work is immortal.
4. Oratorical literature.
5. Field of Oratory,
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6. Kinds of Oratory:

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- Legal,
- Religious.

7. As the interpreter of literature.

Its value as such.

III Comparative View.

1. Literature contains life.

To know it is to respond.

2. Oratory enables us to know literature,

To respond to it fully.

3. Oratory is a means of producing literature,

- Increasing,
 - Strengthening,
 - Beautifying,
- } Literature

4. Literature with Oratory.

The Relation of Oratory to Literature.

Any art, whether it be painting, music, sculpture, literature, or eloquence necessarily bears a relation to every other art; for art of every form is the expression of some great thought or emotion; and in the arts are summed up the highest and best of man's nature.

Art of every form appeals to the spirit, the highest and best of man, and if responded to, fills him with the desire to become nobler and better.

Literature, as implied above, is one of the means of expressing the highest thoughts of man. It includes all thoughts that possess universal value, and are well expressed. De Quincey and other writers divide literature into two classes: first the literature of knowledge; and secondly, the literature of power. By the same writers, the function of the first is said to be to teach; and the function of the second, to move. By liter-

ature of knowledge is meant all writings of a technical character; that class of writings which does not appeal to the whole man. It does not possess universal value. It develops the mind always always on the same plane. The literature of power is that class of writings which is of universal value; it appeals to the highest there is in man; it is the literature of the imagination and emotions. It is this class that raises men from one plane of living, step by step, to a higher. If, then, to the literature of power we add beautiful expression, we have true literature, the permanent expression of the life of individuals, of peoples, and of times.

The scope of literature is limited only by the thoughts and emotions of the human soul. It is higher than the sky, deeper than the sea, and broader than the earth. It transcends the bounds of time, and endures through all eternity.

Every work of literature portrays the life of its author, even though it be against his will. It is not a mere grouping of words so as to make sense, but by means of these words are expressed the highest thoughts, the noblest pas-

sions of the greatest and best minds of any time. The very essence of literature is life; and thus by means of it we may associate with the greatest minds of all times. We all desire to associate with great men. By such associations comes growth; our hopes and aspirations are heightened; our lives made better, and our influence broadened and elevated. Literature, since it contains the very best of the greatest minds, clearly portrayed, is a great influence for good. The growth and influence of a master work of a master mind in the lives of those who associate with it is wonderful. No life can be the same after knowing a good book. Every thought, every sensation, every impression of the reader is modified and influenced by the life of the author of the book.

Literature is a very valuable means of culture — one of the great objects of life. It leads to a finer appreciation of the beautiful and good in everything; it raises the ideals of individuals and of society; it leads to the highest knowledge of human nature; it strengthens and refines the higher and diviner side of our nature, and makes life sweeter and more sympathetic.

The above are some of the characteristics of literature, some benefits that may be derived from it, and its influence upon men and women everywhere. Let us now consider the subject of oratory, showing briefly its characteristics, object, power, and influence.

Oratory is the art of saying what is wanted to be said. This implies not only that it is one of the means of human expression, which is probably an axiom, but also that it is the highest means. To say what one wishes to say implies an end to speak for, and the attainment of the desired end. Hence, the prime objects of oratory are conviction, and action in accordance with conviction. Argument is used to convince; this requires clear statement and sound logic. Action is secured by persuasion, and persuasion employs the highest power of man; nay, the whole man, besides genuine character, sincere convictions and the best knowledge of human nature.

The work of the orator is eternal. His word may be transient, may be forgotten and never recorded as such; but his work, the effect, the feeling aroused in his

auditors will never die while time lasts. But like the ripple of waves started by dropping a pebble in the sea the effect being transmitted from wave to wave to the limit of the sea, so the work of the orator is transmitted from generation to generation until the end of time, and endures through all eternity.

When the words of the orator are recorded, oratorical literature is the result. The literature of every highly civilized nation is graced and strengthened by masterpieces of oratory. Once the principles of liberty engrafted in the hearts of a people, the orator appears. His field is as broad as the conduct of man. He is the interpreter of moral and religious sentiments; the defender of property, both public and private; and the preserver of the rights and liberties of peoples and nations. He holds the destinies of nations and individuals.

In ancient Greece, we find some of the finest specimens of oratorical literature, and some of the greatest manifestations of the orator's power and influence. Demosthenese thunders against Philip of Macedon, and

the people fly to arms and move against the invader. The Roman government is in danger of being overthrown by tyrants. Cicero appears and the tyrant is exposed, his ruthless hand of destruction is stayed, and Rome is safe!

In England, the Petition of Rights is drawn, streams of oratory flow in support of it, and it is passed. In America, the Declaration of Independence is formulated when liberty is questioned. Eloquence again bursts forth; the Colonists whose passions are aroused, rise above themselves, and the inspired document is adopted.

Dartmouth College is on the verge of being ruined, and Daniel Webster defends it before the United States Supreme Court. A masterpiece of oratorical literature is the result; but what is more, the institution, one of "those great lights of science which, for more than a century, have thrown their radiance over our land" is saved.

The question of slavery is growing upon us and must be settled. Wendell Phillips appears on the stage of action, and gradually the people make a decision for the right.

England is hostile to the North. Henry Ward Beecher faces and quiets the howling mobs and enlists their sympathy for the North.

As noted above, the orator enters every field of man's labors. We find him in the Public Assembly, at the Bar, in the Pulpit, and on the Stage. In political oratory, the great object is to change or direct the political course. It deals with great public sentiments and ideals, and aims at directing the hearers to some choice or conduct for social ends. It is addressed to all classes and ages of people, and is so broad and of such universal significance that all the powers of the orator are involved. Political oratory holds the key to the public services of men and nations.

Legal oratory deals with problems of law; questions of national, public, or private interest; questions of property, right, and justice. It is addressed primarily to one or but few persons. Its field is very large, and of vast importance. Among the immortal works in this department may be mentioned "The Impeachment of Warren

Hastings" by Burke, and Webster's "Reply to Hayne".

It is in religious oratory that we have some of the highest manifestations of its power. Through all the history of oratory, this department of it has been a strong working power in the lives of men; and at certain periods it has been the ruling power of the world, the guide of men and nations. Its lofty purpose, spiritual aspirations, universal application, and enduring power rank it among the highest types of literature. It enlists in its service the greatest minds of all ages. Some of the immortal names in this department are Latimer, Wesley, Edwards, Channing, Beecher, Brooks all of whom have been beacon lights in guiding the world's progress.

Oratory is not only the interpreter of moral and religious sentiments and ideals, but it is also the means of receiving the fullest interpretation of literature. Mr. Corson says: "The best response to the essential life of a poem is secured by the fullest interpretative vocal rendering of it." Another writer says: "The best interpretation of a literary work

is always through voice and action". In interpreting a work of literature, oratory expresses in word, action, and tone of voice, by a living being, all that the author expressed in the written page. It adds the life of one who has lived the production to the printed page, and enables us to more fully gain the value of it. In reading a literary production, we get the intellectual understanding of it; when it is expressed by the orator, we get this, and what is infinitely more valuable, we feel the life of the author in his work through the life of the orator. This is especially true of dramatic literature, it being written with the aim of being delivered, amounts to much less without the living personality. "What the statue is to the living man, that is the written page compared to the living speaker".

Oratory more fully expresses the thoughts and emotions, the imagination and feeling, the pathetic and humorous, the sublime and ridiculous, the true and beautiful, — more fully expresses the life in literature; thus it opens to us and leads us to appreciate many of the master productions,

that without it would remain forever sealed to us.

Having considered the various aspects of both literature and oratory, we now try to see wherein they are related.

We noted above that the sum and substance of literature is life. Each literary work is a part of the life of some great mind. Knowing a work of literature, then, is knowing the highest and best of the life of the author, making his life a part of our life through association. It is not only gaining the intellectual meaning and thought; but it is the responding of our spirit, our emotions, imagination, sympathies, and feelings to those of the author. Hiram Coxon, speaking of poetry, puts it thus: "We can know a true poem only so far as we can reproduce it sympathetically within ourselves, — in other words, we know it to the extent to which our own spirit responds to the spiritual appeal which it makes to us." What is true of a poem is, in this respect, true of all true literature, and more broadly, of every fine art.

In considering oratory, we noted that

it is through oratory we gain the fullest response to the essential life of literature; that through oratory and only through oratory we may truly know literature; that it is through oratory that a literary production becomes a part of our being, so that it will find outward expression in our life through word and deed.

Again, we noted that oratory is the direct means of producing a large amount of the master productions of literature; thus increasing, strengthening, beautifying, and diversifying it. Indeed, the two go hand in hand. Literature without oratory is a little more than an intellectual discourse; it is not fully appreciated, is incomplete. With oratory, it is true life, sweet, sympathetic, and beautiful.

"What boots it thy virtue,
 What profit thy parts,
 While one thing thou lackest,
 The art of all arts?"
 "The only credentials,
 Passport to success;
 Opens castle and parlor,—
 Address, man, address."