

APPENDIX

- I. WRITING AN ORATION
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APPENDIX

I. WRITING AN ORATION

WITH all the graces of elocution, no speaker will succeed unless he has something good to say. Further than this, a speaker might be able to write a good essay on his subject, and yet not be able to frame his thoughts for a good oration. There are certain peculiarities that go with oratorical composition.

Not all subjects are suitable for orations. — Not all subjects are capable of good oratorical treatment. The essential difference between an oration and other forms of literary composition is that it makes an appeal. It may aim at influencing the action of men, or merely at getting them to think differently, but *it must make an appeal* of some sort. From this standpoint, it is evident that no oration could be written on *Radium*, or *The Mechanical Construction of Automobiles*. Orations *could* be written on the *Abolition of Child Labor*, or *Napoleon — The Misunderstood*. A man may be held up as the incarnation of some principle which we should adopt in our lives, — such is nearly always the purpose of the biographical oration. It might be stated that the best subjects to write on are men, battles (forensic or military), and problems (industrial, governmental, social, etc.)

Make up your mind what thought you want your audience to carry away. — After you have selected your subject, — or while you are selecting it, — some one thought will present itself to you as the one you want your audi-

ence to carry away. After this has come to you, — don't have more than one purpose in your speech, and be sure that you believe in it yourself, — think of all the possible things you know about the subject that would help you to impress this thought upon your audience. These different things will make about a paragraph apiece. You may not be able at once to think of all that you will finally use, but jot down those ideas that do occur to you, and keep adding to them as you keep thinking about your subject. Doubtless, as you read, too, others will occur to you. Dovetail these into the *one great purpose* that is governing your speech.

Take notes in your own language. — Never take notes in the language of the book or magazine you are reading. If you do, some one may sometime accuse you of plagiarism (stealing literary property) when you really think yourself innocent. Take all your notes in your own language, — unless, of course, you purposely wish to quote something, when you should always mention the author's name. This is required in most of the large oratorical leagues.

Read some great orator whose style you like, just before writing. — Every person, nearly, looks up to some great orator as his ideal. There is some orator whose style always inspires you, — makes you want to do such things as he did. Get some speech of this great orator and read it until you feel that you must throw the book aside and get at writing some of your own thoughts. Then write at once. Give your thought free rein. Don't try to determine whether what you are writing is good or not, — write, write, — don't even stop for the penmanship. This inspiration will probably last until you get nearly your whole speech written. Toward the end you will find that you are getting tired, and that you do not make such good headway as at first. When this occurs, stop, lay

the manuscript aside, and — forget it. Later, not before the next day, look over what you have written. Some of it will probably look foolish. If it does, cut it out. Roughly arrange what you have left, read it all over again, read your "inspiration orator" again, then reread your material very rapidly, and write your conclusion. Now lay the manuscript aside again.

The first revision. — A day or so later, look at your speech once more. Doubtless there will be some more writing that will have to go. Don't be afraid to get rid of it. Work this time to get your paragraphs arranged so that they follow one another naturally, and so that the oratorical intensity of the speech grows toward the end. Perhaps a sentence here and there will not suit you. Fix it. After this is all done, recopy.

The second revision. — After the recopy has rested a day or so, sit down and carefully labor over each sentence, for structure and diction. Test every clause, every word, every punctuation mark, by the best knowledge you have. Cut out a good many of your connectives. Remember you can give to an audience by an inflection of the voice, what oftentimes it would take a whole sentence to say in words on the written page. Don't be worried if it does not *read well*. Get up and go through it as if you were speaking it and see if it *sounds well*. If any part does not suit you, labor at it till it does.

The final copy. — Now take this copy, — which should be so full of corrections that you can hardly make out what the right correction is, — and copy it finally. It would do no harm, — in fact you really ought, — to go over this final copy again, to give the last touches before it leaves your hands. With this done, you can rest from your labors, feeling that you have done the best that could be done.

II. TRAINING FOR CONTESTS

Whether any instructor should have a part in the training of contestants for a public contest is a debatable question. But whichever way it is decided, the following hints it is hoped will be of assistance.

Start early. — This direction may seem needless, but it is of the utmost importance. Unforeseen difficulties are always sure to arise, and it is far better to have too much time than to go on the platform feeling that not all has been done that could be done. With high school pupils a preparation extending through ten weeks would not be any too long.

Work every day. — This is very important. Especially in the matter of voice will this be imperative. The voice does not grow, any more than any of our other muscular powers, by fits and starts. It is the constant, daily exercise that counts. A voice can be wonderfully strengthened by steady work every day for ten weeks. Work both on voice exercises and the delivery of short passages. As for gesture, all the primary positions of the hand should be mastered in all the zones. Work, if alone, before the mirror; if the instructor is present, get on the platform and let him criticize each gesture severely. Do not let the slightest thing that does not please him remain in your delivery. Practice all the technique of moving about on the platform also. In all your work, both in action and voice, imagine your contest audience in front of you. At least an hour's work every day, five days in the week, should be indulged in.

Committing. — After the speech is written, or the recitation or declamation selected, and after this preliminary work has been done, comes the committing. Here all the devices known for memorizing may be used.

First. — Work when you are rested and in good health. If your health is not the best, strive to perfect it as soon as possible. If you are tired at night, as is usually the case, work in the morning.

Second. — Understand your speech thoroughly. If it is a recitation, or declamation, this is especially important. Never have a single word in your speech that you do not understand. Go through your speech, whether it be debate, recitation, declamation, or oration, and make an outline, observing the connection, not in words, but in thought, of each sentence to those that go before. Why does this come next? Is this the effect of that? What things go to support this point? How many points are there? Where does the leading character go from here? What mental picture follows that mental picture? Go through all your speech and study it out.

Third. — Commit in large sections. Get the drift by reading the whole production through several times. After this is done you may go back and correct any slips in the wording that have crept in.

Fourth. — Use several means for fixing the speech in your mind. Write it; the action of the muscles in writing will help you to remember. Read it to yourself from the manuscript page; the position as regards page and line will help. Read it aloud; the sound of your voice will aid. Have some one else read it aloud; the way they read it will impress you. If it is a recitation, see the different scenes *as they are stationary*; see the characters *as they move* about also. *Hear the noises or sounds* that would accompany the scene.

Fifth. — In case any particular place gives you trouble, you will generally find that it is on account of a lack of sequence in the thought. In such cases, it is well to repeat the last words of the preceding sentence with the first

words of the following sentence in a perfectly mechanical way several score of times, at least until the very act of repeating the last words of the sentence preceding the bad place suggests at once the first words after it. When this action of the mind has been secured, it is an easy task to say the words with the expression desired.

Do not overtrain. — As the time of the contest draws near, with all this daily work of rehearsal, there may sometimes develop a tendency to be "tired of the whole thing." If this condition arises, drop out a rehearsal, take an unusually long night's rest, eat plenty of good food, and take a good long walk in the open air.

Nearing the end. — After everything is in readiness, and the last week is before you, lighten the work a little. For the first few days of the week one rehearsal a day in exactly the form wished at the contest will be enough. About three days before the final event there should be a dress rehearsal. The drape of a dress, or the arrangement of a tie or pair of cuffs, may sometimes prove a hindrance to the means of expression previously drilled on. For the last three days the contestant should not speak his production aloud. He may sit down and repeat it to his instructor, merely to keep the memory channels from filling up, but no vigorous practice whatever should be indulged in. Long walks should be taken daily. Be careful of exposure which might lead to a cold. Take good rest. If possible, a week beforehand, the contestant should see the auditorium in which he is to speak. The image of the place will then stay in his mind, and all of his practice will be done with the particular conditions under which he is to speak clearly in his mind. This will avoid any shock on the final day.

The final day. — This is the hardest day of all to outline. If a trip must be taken, get to the place before noon.

After lunch go to the auditorium, see how the furniture is arranged, practice the start and finish of the speech, and go back to the hotel. Do not go to a private house if it is possible to avoid it. You will be under certain obligations there which will not be met at the hotel, where you can be governed absolutely by your own pleasure. After you have returned to the hotel, go to your room, pull down the curtain, and lie down. If you can sleep, do it, if not, at least stay on your back. Get up a little before dinner, take a short walk, and *eat for dinner the same kind of food that you usually do at home, but perhaps a little less of it.* Be careful here. Nothing is so fatal as a change of diet at this late date. Don't use any special stimulant, such as coffee, unless you are in the habit of taking it at home at your regular dinner; the excitement of the occasion will be enough of a stimulant. If you have kept on your usual clothes, — at least loose ones, — during the day, when you get dressed for the evening you will feel the best you ever felt in your life. Try the start and a few gestures of your speech before the mirror before you go to the hall. *Beware of reception committees.* They may want to show you the sights of the town, but their intentions should always be suspected. Keep to your method of training, no matter what they wish.

At the hall. — After you get to the auditorium, don't stand up. Sit down, anywhere, but in some place where no draft will blow upon you. Take things rather easy until two or three minutes before you are to go on. Don't use any more energy than you have to. If charts are to be used in the debate, they should be put up by some one else, and you should only go to see if the pointer is in its proper place and that the charts are arranged all right. If you are slow to warm up to your oration, and generally speak it better, to the knowledge of your trainer, the second

time of an evening than the first, get him to send you through some vigorous gestures, perhaps those of your strongest paragraph, just before he gives you the final push and word.

Afterwards. — If you have followed these directions, and no accidents have occurred, you may rest in quiet, assured that so far as in you lay, you have done your best to secure the coveted honors of the contest.

III. SOME EXTEMPORE PROGRAMS FOR BEGINNERS

Below are given several topics that will usually result in good speeches. A number of additional topics will suggest themselves under each head.

1. ATHLETICS :

- (a) Summer baseball.
- (b) Professionalism.
- (c) Relative value of baseball and basketball.
- (d) Danger of football.
- (e) Mental and moral training gained in football.

2. POLITICS :

- (a) Disadvantage of adhering to party lines.
- (b) The newspaper and politics.
- (c) Advantages of the primary system.
- (d) How political reforms are brought about.
- (e) Votes for women.

3. THE NEW EDUCATION :

- (a) Manual training.
 - (x) Wood work.
 - (y) Metal work.
- (b) Domestic science.
 - (x) Cooking.
 - (y) Sewing.
- (c) Stenography.
- (d) The vocation teacher.
- (e) Playgrounds during the summer.

4. A PROGRAM FOR PRACTICE IN INTRODUCING A SPEECH :

- (a) The reminiscent introduction.
- (b) The story introduction.
- (c) The epigrammatic or paradoxical introduction.
- (d) The quotation introduction.
- (e) The personal introduction.

5. A PROGRAM FOR PRACTICE IN CLOSING A SPEECH :

- (a) The summary.
 - (1) By numbering the parts.
 - (2) By using such terms as "again," "further," etc.
- (b) The appeal.
- (c) Closing with a picture of ideal conditions.
- (d) Closing with a prose quotation.
- (e) Closing with a poetical quotation.

6. AN EXPOSITORY PROGRAM :

- (a) Explaining wireless telegraphy.
- (b) Explaining the theory of aviation.
- (c) The judicial recall.
- (d) The structure of an epic poem.
- (e) The structure of a popular song.

7. A NARRATIVE PROGRAM :

- (a) Some trip.
- (b) Some football game.
- (c) Some play.
- (d) Some meal.
- (e) Some party.

8. A DESCRIPTIVE PROGRAM :

- (a) Niagara.
- (b) The Rockies.
- (c) The mill pond.
- (d) A friend's house.
- (e) A beautiful picture.

9. AN ARGUMENTATIVE PROGRAM :

- (a) High school fraternities.
- (b) The honor system.
- (c) Elective *vs.* prescribed studies.

- (d) Examinations.
 (e) Gymnasium work.
10. A STORY PROGRAM:
 Reproduce stories from the current magazines.
11. CHARACTER SKETCHING:
 Sketch some strong character you have known.
12. THE EULOGY:
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