A PRACTICAL RHETORIC

FOR INSTRUCTION IN

ENGLISH COMPOSITION AND REVISION

IN

COLLEGES AND INTERMEDIATE SCHOOLS

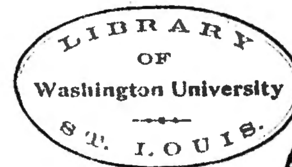
BY

J. SCOTT CLARK, A.M.

PROFESSOR OF RHETORIC IN THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS,
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

for redec students

LIBRARY OF Washington University ST. LOUIS



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1887

OK 4-9-27

COPYRIGHT, 1886,
BY
HENRY HOLT & CO.

DRUMMOND & NEU,
Electrotypers,
New York.

Printed by
C. F. VOGELIUS,
New York.

*TO HER WITHOUT WHOSE PATIENT HELPFULNESS THE FOLLOWING PAGES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PREPARED,
THEY ARE INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR
AS AN ACT OF SIMPLE JUSTICE.*

Copyright, 1886,
by
Henry Holt & Co.

Drummond & Neu,
Electrotypers,
New York.

Printed by
C. F. Vogelius,
New York.

(OK 4-9-27)

TO HER WITHOUT WHOSE PATIENT HELPFULNESS THE FOLLOWING PAGES COULD NOT HAVE BEEN PREPARED,
THEY ARE INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR
AS AN ACT OF SIMPLE JUSTICE.

PREFACE.

THE only reason for venturing to add another to the already long list of text-books on English composition, is the desire to aid in giving to the rhetorical training in our schools a more practical character. That much of this training is, and has been, impracticable and fruitless is the verdict of our ablest thinkers on the subject. It is agreed that to be practical, a text-book on Rhetoric must be so constructed that, after a careful study of its principles and a thorough drill in its exercises, the student shall write better English than he wrote before taking up the book. That most of our current text-books on this subject do not meet this test is the belief of the author, after a careful, extended, and impartial trial of nearly all of these. That the average man, even of so-called "liberal education," composes and punctuates badly, often almost incomprehensibly, is known to every editor. Perhaps no other fact has caused so much adverse criticism by the press upon college graduates and our system of collegiate education as has the kind of English often contributed by those graduates. That this state of things is not due to any lack of attention to the branch of Rhetoric, an examination of the curricula of any ten of our prominent seminaries and colleges will prove. In too many text-books, the pupil is led through a labyrinth of abstractions bearing such names as "Invention," "Taste," "Deduction," "Simplicity," "Partial Exposition," "Feeling," "Perfection," "The Sublime," "The Picturesque," "The Graceful," "The Novel," "The Wonderful," and so on, until he becomes lost in a theoretical maze, while he

goes on writing and speaking in the same obscure, clumsy forms that he used before he ever saw a Rhetoric.

Opposed to this artificial process comes the fact, patent to every careful observer, that the boy learns to think and to express himself, with tongue or pen, just as he learned to walk—unconsciously, by imitation and observation; that he obtains his methods and means of "invention" from a hundred sources too subtle and too widely varying ever to be analyzed or classified; that his style is largely formed, as is his character, by surrounding influences. And it is well that this is so; for it is this very subtlety and variety in the sources of invention that gives to every man that individuality which is too sacred to be destroyed or mutilated by inflexible theories.

In Herbert Spencer's essay on "The Philosophy of Style,"—an essay that should be carefully read by every student of English composition—after admitting that "good composition is far less dependent upon acquaintance with its laws than upon practice and natural aptitude," the author says: "Yet, as facilitating revision, a knowledge of the thing to be achieved—a clear idea of what constitutes a beauty and what a blemish—cannot fail to be of service."

In this quotation will be found the thought that underlies the following pages. It is the belief of the author that the only practical rhetorical training must be largely negative; that the ability to revise, readily detect, and quickly rectify any blemish in what has already been written, is the first requisite; that continual practice of this kind will enable the pupil to avoid, unconsciously, the most common faults in form and style; that aside from certain language lessons in the lower grades, what is generally called "invention" cannot be taught in the class-room; that those delicate graces of style which give to a composition that which makes it a classic cannot be obtained from either text-book or teacher; in a word, that Rhetoric must be an analysis rather than a synthesis. This, in fact, is the very kind of "rhetoric" that is being put into actual daily practice in every newspaper office in the world.

The book is not intended for grades lower than our high-schools and seminaries; neither is it intended for use by any teacher who is the mere servant of his text-book. Throughout, an effort has been made toward such condensation as shall leave to the teacher the most room for exposition and independent work. For example, the sections in Chapters III. and IV. of Part II., treating, respectively, of prepositions and word-formation, will be found each to contain work enough to occupy an average class many weeks. Therefore, unless there is ample time for completing the work in the remaining chapters, it would be wise to omit most of that in the above-named sections.

The book is intended, moreover, not merely as a class text-book, but as a manual in criticising and correcting the compositions that may be required of the student. It is hoped that, by adopting the method here given, he will learn to detect and rectify his own errors, and so to avoid them later—an end that is too rarely attained.

Of the examples for practice in Parts I. and II., less than a dozen have been in print before. They have been selected from about seven hundred undergraduate essays, taken at random from several thousand which it has been the fortune of the author somewhat minutely to criticise. It is believed that an advantage is here gained over the common method of selecting examples for practice from those writers, of more or less reputation, whose surroundings, characteristics, and habits of thought must have been widely different from those of the undergraduate of to-day.

Few new principles have been introduced. The book aims to be rather an application and a more practical adaptation of principles already enounced. In selecting and restating these principles, use has been made of the works of Aristotle, Blair, Campbell, Whately, Kames, Angus, Trench, Bain, Spencer, Abbott, Quackenbos, Bancroft, Swinton, Welch, Phelps, Kellogg, White, A. S. Hill, D. J. Hill, Hart, Haven, Bardeen, and others. In case any failure has been made to accredit points taken directly from other

writers, the author will be thankful for information of the fact.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that Part IV., on "Versification," is based on the chapters devoted to that subject in Abbott and Seeley's "English Lessons for English People;" a work that, for reference at least, is invaluable.

J. S. C.

College of Liberal Arts,
Syracuse University,
April, 1886.

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS.

In order to adapt the work to the needs of those teachers in our intermediate schools who prefer to take up the simpler rules for punctuating, gaining clearness, etc., before dealing with essay outlines and with the more complex principles governing the different kinds of composition, it has been thought best, in arranging the parts, to deviate slightly from a strict logical order, by placing the discussion of the thought after that of form and style.

It has been the custom of the author to begin with the first three chapters of Part III., assigning for the first essay a description of some object or collection of objects that has actually been seen; then, after the first essay has been presented, to take up Parts I. and II., successively, by placing the marginal numbers upon the essay according to the suggestions on pages 2 and 55. So much of the time of the class as is not employed in discussing the errors in the essays is then devoted to fixing the principles of form and style by means of the exercises under the various heads. The second essay assigned is a narrative, and Chapter IV., Part III., on narration, is taken up before the class begins writing, and so on; taking the remaining chapters of Part III., from time to time, as a preparation for the corresponding essays, and returning meanwhile to the practice of applying the principles of form and style.

In view of results obtained by this method, the author feels warranted in urging its use with all students of college, or even of advanced high-school grade.

With younger pupils, where the chapters are taken consecutively from the beginning, the same method of studying the principles will be found most satisfactory.

Let every exercise under both form and style be placed upon a slip of paper or a card, *without* the numbers in parentheses. Let each member of the class draw one of these slips or cards as his name is called, and let him place upon the board his cor-

rected rendering of the sentence. After the sentences assigned for the recitation are all corrected, with such review slips as may be used, let each pupil give (1) the original form of his sentence, (2) the corrected form, (3) his reason (the rule) for every change made. Then throw the corrected version open to the entire class for criticism, if any be necessary. In this way every member of a large class may be set at work as promptly as in a recitation in mathematics, and the attention of every member may easily be held throughout the hour. By taking, successively, the three steps just enumerated, quibbling and useless discussion over different versions may be avoided.

By this use of cards or slips the principles of form and style will become fixed more easily and more thoroughly than by assigning them to be arbitrarily memorized. The exercises are published separately, printed only on one side, in pamphlet form, so that by cutting these pages into slips the teacher may be saved the labor of copying the exercises. The reference numbers can be obliterated if the teacher prefers.

CONTENTS.

PART I.

THE FORM.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

SPACING AND UNDERSCORING 3

CHAPTER II.

SPELLING 5

CHAPTER III.

THE USE OF CAPITALS 10

CHAPTER IV.

PUNCTUATION 13

CHAPTER V.

USES OF ITALICS 27

CHAPTER VI.

PARAGRAPHING 28

PART II.

THE STYLE.

CHAPTER I.

CLEARNESS 47

CHAPTER II.

FORCE 63

CHAPTER III.

PAGE

PRECISION.. 82

CHAPTER IV.

PURITY.. 107

CHAPTER V.

PROPRIETY.. 135

CHAPTER VI.

UNITY.. 141

CHAPTER VII.

EUPHONY.. 145

CHAPTER VIII.

GENERAL EXERCISES.. 159

CHAPTER IX.

RHETORICAL IMAGERY.. 187

PART III.

THE THOUGHT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SELECTION OF A SUBJECT.. 241

CHAPTER II.

THE OUTLINE—ITS IMPORTANCE—METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION. 248

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION.. 263

CHAPTER IV.

NARRATION.. 275

CHAPTER V.

EXPOSITION.. 283

CHAPTER VI.

PAGE

PERSUASION.. 288

CHAPTER VII.

ORAL DISCOURSE—ITS DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS..... 299

PART IV.

VERSIFICATION.

CHAPTER I.

POETIC DICTION—RHYTHM.. 303

CHAPTER II.

METRE.. 316

62. "Then sated *Hunger* bids his brother thirst,
Produce the mighty bowl:
Nor wanting is the brown October, drawn
Mature and perfect, from *his* dark retreat
Of thirty years, and now *his honest front*
Flames in the light refulgent."

63. "See *Winter* comes, to rule the vary'd year,
Sullen and sad with all his rising train,
Vapors and *clouds* and *storms*."

64. "She shall be dignified with this high honor,
To bear my lady's train; lest the base earth
Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss;
And, of so great a favor growing proud,
Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,
And make rough winter everlastingly."

65. *Calista*. "Is it the voice of thunder, or my father?
Madness! Confusion! let the storm come on!
Let the tumultuous roar drive all upon me,
Dash my devoted bark; ye surges, break it;
'Tis for my ruin that the tempest rises.
When I am lost, sunk to the bottom low,
Peace shall return, and all be calm again."

66. *Gonsalez*. "O my son! from the blind dotage
Of a father's fondness these ills arose.
For thee I've been ambitious, base, and bloody:
For thee I've plung'd into this sea of sin;
Stemming the tide with only one weak hand,
While t'other bore the crown (to wreathe thy brow)
Whose weight has sunk me ere I reach'd the shore."

PART III.

THE THOUGHT.

CHAPTER I.

THE SELECTION OF A SUBJECT.

Of all the tasks assigned to the average student, from the grammar grades up through the college course, none has been the subject of so much complaint as that of English composition. "That essay" is the bugbear of the school curriculum, and has been since the days of the fathers. The fact that this complaint is so often heard from pupils who never become discouraged about their work in other departments is evidence that the irksomeness of rhetorical work is not entirely attributable to the character or the ability of the average student.

The first cause of difficulty in composition is doubtless to be found in the tendency of young writers to select too broad a subject. Indefinite thinking is always weak, confused, difficult thinking. Take, for example, the following subjects, quoted *verbatim* from actual programmes of seminary rhetorical exercises:

Commerce,	Light,	Words,
Conflict,	Wealth,	Labor,
The Arts,	Sleep,	Newspapers,
Ruins,	Life,	Hypocrisy,
Names,	Education,	Pride,
Dissatisfaction,	Envy,	Clouds,
Public Opinion,	Selfishness,	Curiosity.

And the list might be prolonged indefinitely from the programmes offered in our intermediate schools. Now, in

how many of the subjects quoted is any one line of thought clearly indicated? From what one could we tell what the writer is really to write about?

The first essential, then, in selecting a subject, is that it be limited to one clear, fundamental idea; in other words, that it be so narrowed down that the writer shall constantly be aiming in one direction instead of five or six. Take, for example, the first subject in the list above quoted. It contains at least eight good essay themes, viz.:—

1. The Importance of Commerce;
2. The History of Commerce;
3. Methods of Commerce;
4. Obstructions to Commerce;
5. Evils in Commerce;
6. Possibilities of Commerce;
7. Influence of Commerce on Morals;
8. Dangers to Commerce.

And if the word "commerce" be taken in a figurative sense, the number of themes may be increased indefinitely. Again, taking from our list the subject Education. This might be analyzed into themes as follows:—

1. What is an Education?
2. Benefits of an Education;
3. Methods of Education;
4. The History of Education;
5. Errors in Education;
6. Essentials in Education;
7. Great Names in Education, and so on.

The themes so far selected for illustration have been mainly expository in character; but there is equal danger of too great breadth in stating an argumentative theme. The trite proposition, "The pen is mightier than the sword," affords an illustration. From this we may legitimately draw the following:—

1. Newspapers are more powerful than armies;
2. The Poet Homer was more powerful than Alexander;
3. Mrs. Stowe accomplished more toward the abolition of slavery than did John Brown;
4. General education is a greater safeguard to a city than is a strong police force;
5. Popular instruction will do more for the temperance cause than will legal enactment.

Almost any general proposition may be similarly narrowed.

Sometimes, again, the process of narrowing down a theme consists of several successive steps. Take from our list, for example, the subject, "The Arts." Successive analysis gives us the following:—

1. Original general theme—The Arts.
2. Narrowed theme—The Fine Arts.
3. Narrowed farther—The Growth of the Fine Arts.
4. Narrowed still farther—The Growth of the Fine Arts in America.
5. Still farther—The Growth of the Fine Arts in America since 1870.

Thus, by four successive steps, we obtain for our composition a theme that is excellent, because it confines the writer to one line of thought, and prevents "scattering." It is, moreover, a theme involving only so many facts and relations as may be fairly touched upon in an essay of from five hundred to one thousand words. But to treat even briefly the original, unnarrowed theme would require at least an encyclopædia volume; and this could be done successfully only by analyzing the theme and treating it under several separate heads.

In the too common attempt to write upon such a general theme, the pupil is like a traveller standing at the junction of several paths. Wishing to reach a certain destination, he confidently, but often quite casually, selects his path, and follows this until it also branches out into many diverging ways. Then come hesitation, confusion, discouragement. If he is exceptionally determined, our writer-traveller retraces his steps to the original starting-point, puzzles his brain over the remaining paths, and then starts out again only to repeat his first experience; and so the process of unthinking goes on, till the pupil is lost in a maze of his own construction, and gives up the effort in despair. That this is not an exaggerated picture, almost any practical teacher of rhetoric will admit. With a properly narrowed theme, however, the writer has before him a straight road, so plainly marked that any diverging by-paths

which he may find will serve, merely by their subordinate character, only to assure him that he is on the main road.

Another advantage gained by carefully narrowing the theme is that, in his preliminary reading, the writer can thus easily select what is relevant. With a simple subject and with the use of a good index, the writer may gain, in a few moments, all that is relevant to his theme in a large volume. With an indefinite subject, one may wander aimlessly through a book and secure, in the end, no valuable accessions to his knowledge of that subject.

In certain kinds of composition, especially in Description and Narration, weakness and bewilderment are caused, not by confusing different lines of thought, but by endeavoring to cover too much ground on one line. An illustration of this may be found in our fifth narrowed theme on page 243.

Here, without some limiting date, such as 1870, the subject would include so much as to be incapable of fair treatment in an average essay. In descriptive and narrative composition the author stands at the centre of a circle yet to be constructed: his first care must be to limit the radius.

Although the first difficulty of composing, and the first cause of indefiniteness and consequent weakness in too many productions, have already been pointed out, some further suggestions as to the selection of a subject may be helpful. We give these in numerical order:—

1. *Avoid trite subjects.* The world is too full of unhackneyed themes ever to make it necessary for undergraduates to dilate further on "Spring," "Home," "Friendship," "The Benefits of Adversity," and the like.

Let it be remembered, at the same time, that a trite general subject may, by proper narrowing, furnish one that is fresh as well as definite. For example, a very readable essay might be written on "The Disadvantages of Close Friendship."

2. *Gain themes and suggestions for themes by general reading.* There is hardly a chapter of such writers as Motley, Macaulay, and Victor Hugo that does not contain or suggest many fresh, interesting themes. Our best current literature is also most prolific in suggestion.

3. *Select some theme in which you are personally interested.* Forced interest is always weak interest. It is doubtful whether it is ever wise in a teacher to assign to an entire class, or to any pupil, a particular subject. By restricting the subjects in a general way, all the advantages of definite assignment are gained, and at the same time room is left for individual tastes.

4. *If the theme is to be argumentative, select one on which you have personal convictions.* Earnestness is the very soul of eloquence. Convince your reader or hearer that you are really in earnest, and his favorable attention is secured.

5. *Take a theme that is within your mental powers and acquisitions.* It is not necessary for men and women under twenty-five years of age, or thereabouts, to enlighten the world on such doctrines as those of Heredity, Evolution, Sanctification, Free-will, The Immortality of the Soul, etc. "One of the best results of writing," says President Hill,* "is that learners study a subject carefully in order to write about it well. But the subject should not be above the writer's ability to understand, with a reasonable amount of reflection, advice, and reading." Many weak essays have resulted from an ambition to deal with a large subject.

6. *State your theme intelligibly.* The prime object in stating the theme upon a title-page or printed programme, or by word of mouth, is, that the mental effort of the reader or hearer may be thus economized by giving him a suggestion of what is to come. A popular violation of this principle, and one upheld by some eminent authors, is that

* "Elements of Rhetoric," p. 8.

of prefixing fanciful titles. Take, for example, such abstractions as Ruskin's "A Crown of Wild Olives" and "*Munera Pulveris*," Longfellow's "Hyperion," etc.

Here, too, such ambiguous titles as arise from a confusion of genitives are to be avoided. For example, the title, "The Fear of the Demigods" is wholly ambiguous.

7. *Make the formal statement of the theme no broader than the essay itself.* Nearly every writer on a general theme unconsciously narrows that theme down more or less. If, for example, it is "The Importance of Trifles," let that and not "Trifles" be the theme announced.

8. *Adapt the theme to the views and inclinations of the recipients.*

In school and college exercises, a wide variety of themes is allowable; but these are only the beginning of practical rhetoric. It is admitted that the success of any writer or speaker, as measured by his ability to modify the acts and the opinions of those whom he addresses, depends more upon his skill in this matter of adaptation than upon any other element. Bain* notes the fact that Milton, and after him Erskine, each eminent as a master of elegant prose, alike failed in securing the abolishment of the obnoxious censorship of the press, because the arguments of each, though invincible and eloquent, were addressed to motives far above those that influenced the mass of English voters and English statesmen. While a committee from the House of Commons made up of men so obscure that Macaulay does not even mention their names, readily secured the repeal of the measure by calling the attention of Parliament to points that were within the pale of popular comprehension and popular interest.

The writer who has just come from the elevated mental surroundings of school life needs to be especially careful on this point. He must remember that there are many topics the discussion of which would be listened to with interest

* "Rhetoric," pages 220 to 223.

by a company of educated men, yet would fail to gain even respectful attention from a popular assemblage.

In general, the writer should know something of the views, the characteristics, and especially the prejudices of his readers or hearers before selecting his theme. It does not follow from this principle that a writer or speaker should descend to the absolute mental or moral plane of his hearers; but he must take care that the step between his plane and theirs be not too wide. Popular views can be elevated only by gradual stages.

9. *The theme must be adapted, also, to the occasion.* Temporarily prevailing sentiments of sorrow, joy, suspicion, jealousy, vengeance, and the like, must not be disregarded. Through a neglect to observe the proprieties of the occasion, many a production which must otherwise have been regarded as strong or brilliant has been worse than a failure.

Often the impropriety results from the nature of the circumstances rather than from any prevailing sentiment. The college Junior who soberly addressed an audience composed largely of young ladies on the requisites of a good husband did not succeed in securing the grave attention of his hearers.

Summary.—In a word, then, the subject selected should contain but one definite line of thought; should not be trite; may often be suggested by general reading; should be one in which the writer is personally interested; if argumentative, one on which he has convictions; should be suited to his abilities; should be stated intelligibly; should be stated as no broader than the essay; and should be adapted to the views and the intelligence of those addressed as well as to the occasion.

CHAPTER II.

THE OUTLINE—ITS IMPORTANCE—METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION.

NEXT to the fault of selecting too broad a subject, and still more productive of confusion and difficulty to the young writer, is the habit of composing, or attempting to compose, without having first constructed a careful framework. That almost every writer does unconsciously form a partial framework before beginning the definite work of composition proves only the need of more careful attention to this preliminary work. All composition really consists of two distinct but essential steps:—1. The collection and classification of material by investigation, reading, reflection, etc. 2. The union of these into a smoothly connected, harmonious whole by the use of such terms and such arts of expression as may conduce to this end.

When pupils can be taught thoroughly to separate these two steps, then the prevalent complaint about the difficulty of essay-writing will largely cease. No mind can perform two such tasks at once and perform each task well. Distraction, neglect, and difficulty must always be the result of such an attempt. It would be as wise for a carpenter to attempt to unite with his trade the occupations of chopper, carrier, sawyer, and lumber-dealer, stopping at every step of his work to go again into the forest, fell a tree, haul it, saw it, and prepare it for the real carpenter's use, as for a student to attempt to put his ideas into clear, strong English at the same time that he is trying to originate or collect those ideas. Either effort is enough at one time.

The real thinking, then, the real invention of an article, should be almost entirely done before the first definite sentence is written. Of course, new ideas will be suggested during the process of elaborating the various heads and subheads of the outline. But if the first operation has been thoroughly performed, these ideas will be of minor importance, and can easily be arranged in their proper places. The obscure, clumsy style so common even among college graduates is not to be wondered at when we consider the constant distractions arising from this harmful habit, as common as it is harmful, of trying to do two things at once.

The construction of an essay, moreover, may profitably be compared in several respects to the construction of a frame house. The framework is just as necessary in the one case as in the other. The builder who should take his materials indiscriminately—placing first upon the ground, perhaps, a bunch of shingles, then a load of boards, then a few square timbers, then a keg of nails, then a pail of paint, and so on, making only a confused heap of unassorted matter, to which he should give the name of a house—such a man would be considered insane. Yet this is just the way in which pupils too often attempt to write an essay.

True, there are varying degrees of confusion or of arrangement, according to the varying ideas of order natural to different persons, and unconsciously applied.

Some pupils lay the foundation (their general reading on a subject) fairly, and put some of the main timbers (the main heads of the outline) in their proper places, but fail to complete this first step, thus leaving the structure one-sided and disproportionate. The essay framework must be complete; that is, it must not omit, among its main timbers, or heads, any important division or relation of the theme.

Other pupils determine the main heads of the outline and arrange these in their proper order, but fail to determine and classify the subheads under each; as if the builder should try to nail the outside boards directly to the large corner-posts without the intervening smaller timbers.

Others, again, insert sufficient smaller timbers, but con-

fuse these as to their places, putting those intended for the lower story in the upper, and *vice versa*. The essay outline must have subheads carefully determined, and each arranged logically under its appropriate main head.

Still other writers (and this is a very common weakness) always build the front walk and porch before beginning the main part of the structure. It is as wise in building an essay as in building a house to leave the approaches till the rest is completed. Otherwise, there is great danger of making the veranda, for example, too large for the house. Long introductions are the favorite weakness of young writers. To a young editor who wrote to Horace Greeley asking what was the best method of writing an editorial, the veteran replied, "Write the best article you can; divide it in the middle, burn the first half, and publish the last." To the same effect President Hill prescribes * that the introduction should be "modest, moderate, short, and natural," and should be "such as to excite interest."

And, finally, a few writers give the weight of their attention to the paint, cornice, and carving, neglecting the fundamental features of the building. Rhetorical figures, and the other ornaments of style, are valuable only when used *as* ornaments; they can never take the place of plain, earnest thought.

Besides simplifying his work and relieving him from continual distraction, the practice of making formal, preliminary outlines gives to the writer many other advantages. In the first place,

It enables him to write closely within prescribed limits. With the development of general literary culture, and with the multiplication of the sources of information, this requisite has become imperative. Enter, even temporarily, the employ of any successful newspaper or magazine publisher, and you will be asked to treat your subject within a certain

* "Elements of Rhetoric," p. 17.

number of pages, a certain portion of a column, or in a certain number of words. The production must vary but the least in either direction from the limit. In such a situation the unmethodical writer is most helpless. And the same is true of so-called extempore composition. The nervous excitement attendant upon facing an audience acts, in many cases, strongly as a stimulant to undue expansion. Inspired by the occasion, the speaker "spins out" his utterances in blissful unconsciousness of the fact that he is spinning at all. How often is the delegate to some convention, or the participant in some general debate, where only a definite number of minutes is allowed to each speaker, called ruthlessly to his seat by the descending gavel before he has fairly begun his introduction! When analyzed, this undue expansion, in written as well as in extempore composition, will be found to result almost entirely from giving to some division or subdivision of the subject more than its proportionate amount of space or time. With a careful outline before him, however, the writer has a constant check upon this tendency. The framework is a gauge by which he can, at any point, compare and estimate, thus learning where to prune and where to expand.

By preparing a framework before beginning to put his ideas into definite form, the writer is enabled to read up his subject accurately and profitably.

With only a few hours available for the work, and with anywhere from five to twenty volumes before him, each of which may contain facts or suggestions pertinent to his theme, he must have clearly in mind the points on which he is seeking information, so that he may read by indexes and tables of contents; otherwise, his reading must result only in confusion and failure. In such preliminary reading it is not necessary to make long verbatim extracts. Only short catch-words and expressions need be noted, with the number of the page and volume attached, leaving the verbatim extracts till the subsequent process of writing. The

amount of ground that can be covered in this way, even in an hour, by a well-trained writer would astonish any one who has been accustomed to "read up" subjects without forming preliminary outlines. It will be found, also, that this process of reading, like that of reflection on the respective subdivisions of an outline, will often suggest to the mind other subdivisions; so that, to recur to our figure, the builder will find, and insert or substitute, additional small timbers in the framework while he is preparing the boards to cover those already in place. For let it always be remembered that, in the words of Whately, "the outline should not be allowed to fetter the writer. It should serve merely as a track to mark out a path for him, and not a groove to confine him."

If the theme is one with which the writer is comparatively unfamiliar, his reading may cause him to increase or to rearrange even the main heads of his outline; but this will be only an additional proof of the need of an outline.

Let it also be remembered that the only practicable method of reading in this age of the world is by indexes. If a book has not a good index, better throw it aside and take up one that has. No well-informed writer or publisher will now issue such a volume. Among general indexes doubtless the most helpful is that monumental volume. "Poole's Index." By this book, to be found in every good public library, the reader is directed intelligently to the best thoughts of the best contemporary thinkers, on almost every possible subject, for the last seventy-five years. By its use, the current literature since 1809 becomes to the writer a vast storehouse of information and suggestion. Another most practical help in preliminary reading are the monthly reference-lists issued by the librarian of the Providence, R. I., public library. These lists give the available bibliography of such subjects as are, for the time, before the public mind, and of standard subjects arbitrarily but judiciously selected. They are to be found in most of

our college and public libraries, and afford an excellent illustration of modern practical tendencies in this direction.

In concluding this section we cannot, perhaps, do better than to quote the following from Marsh: "'What, *read* books!' said one of the great lights of European physiological science to a not less eminent American scholar. 'I never *read* a book in my life except the Bible.' He had time only to glance over the thousands of volumes which lay around him, to consult them occasionally, to accept the particular facts or illustrations which he needed to aid him in his own researches."

The following outline for an essay on "The Character of Mrs. Browning" will illustrate what has been said concerning the method of reading with an outline. The books to which reference is made, in brief, are: the "Encyclopædia Britannica," "Chambers's Encyclopædia,"the "Diamond" and "Red Line" editions of Mrs. Browning's poems, her correspondence with Horne, Miss Mitford's "Recollections of a Literary Life," Bayard Taylor's "Views Afoot;" an essay by Theodore Tilton published in a collection called "Sanctum Sanctorum," and found also as an introduction to the four-volume edition of her poems, 1862; Hillard's "Six Months in Italy;" and an article by E. C. Stedman in *Scribner's Magazine*, vol. vii.

I. Influences surrounding her earlier years.
   - *a.* That of her father.—"My Public and my Critic," Britannica 391; Dedication in edition of 1844.
   - *b.* That of her tutor.—Tilton 27, Poems 89 and 97.
   - *c.* That of her general reading.—Æschylus, Plato, Shakespeare, Mitford 172.

II. Phases of her character as indicated in her early works.
   - *a.* Her industry.—The volume of Plato, Mitford 171, the Hebrew Scriptures, Scribner 106, and Poems 331.
   - *b.* Effects of her brother's death.—Seclusion, Tilton 30.
   - *c.* Her independence.—Tilton 28.

III. Influence of marriage upon her character.—Scribner 108.
   - *a.* Love and courtship.—The compliment in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," Poems 498; The chance meeting, Am. Cycl. 766, Tilton 32.
   - *b.* Her life in Italy.—Tilton 36 and 7, Hillard.

c. Maternity.—Tilton 63, "Stand out into the Sun!" Poems 309.

IV. Her religious views.—"The Touch of Christ's Hand," Britannica 391; Earnestness, Scribner 113; Swedenborgianism, Scribner 114, Tilton 56–7 and 59.
  a. As manifested in her poems.—pp. 52, 88, 134, and 386.
  b. As manifested in her own testimony.—Letters to Horne.

V. Views of contemporary problems.
  a. Slavery.—Tilton 41 and 54, Poems 134.
  b. Juvenile labor.—Poems 299.
  c. The social evil.—Poems 505.
  d. Woman's rights.—Poems 341.

VI. Conclusion.
  a. Her comparative standing as a poet.—Britannica 391; compared with Landor, Scribner 104; Sonnets, Scribner 109; compared with Thackeray, ibid. 111.
  b. Her work for humanity.
    1. Italy.—The monument, Hillard· Devotion to Italy, Tilton 33 and 34.
    2. England.—Tilton 35.
    3. World at large.—Tilton 24.

A third advantage of outline construction is the mental discipline afforded by the process. It is an admitted fact, that the best mental training is afforded by those branches that call for the most careful and continuous process of analysis; and this is pre-eminently the process employed in forming an essay outline. It is a constant analysis, accompanied by that previous synthesis on which all analysis depends. If a student were to write in this manner continually for four years, upon the widest variety of subjects, reading and reflecting carefully on each and analyzing his results, he could hardly fail thus to become liberally educated. The analytic mind is always the strong mind.

METHOD OF OUTLINE CONSTRUCTION.

Having pointed out the importance of the outline, it remains to offer some suggestions as to methods of construction.

The testimony of the most successful teachers is unanimous in favor of assigning subjects in a general way. To leave the younger student free to select his own subject is

to encourage looseness of thought, and possibly plagiarism. On the other hand, to assign to every member of a class the same subject is to make the work of both the teacher and the class, as a whole, monotonous and lifeless. The method of assigning general subjects fairly avoids these dangers on either side.

Suppose, then, that our theme is to be a description of some object or collection of objects that we have personally seen. Suppose, for example, that we take some large public building with which we are familiar. There is perhaps no better way than, as Hill says,* to "surround the theme with questions." Concerning the theme in hand we might ask as follows:—

1. Where is it?
   a. In what village or city, what county, state, etc.?
   b. In what position with reference to surrounding objects?
2. What is its shape?
3. What is its size?
4. Of what materials is it made?
5. What is its architectural style?
6. When was it built?
7. For what purpose was it built?
8. How does it fulfil that purpose?
9. What is the arrangement inside?
10. How is it finished inside?
11. How is it furnished?
12. How is it ventilated?
13. How is it lighted?
14. What did it cost?
15. How does it compare with other buildings of its kind?
   a. In cost?
   b. In architectural beauty?
   c. In convenience?
16. What is its value to the town?
17. How is it finished outside?
   a. Cornice.
   b. Tower.
   c. Paint, etc.

Rearranging these questions logically, in tabular form, and adding subdivisions naturally suggested, we have the following outline:—

* "Elements of Rhetoric," p. 13.

THE G—— OPERA-HOUSE.

I. Its location.
  a. In what town, State, etc.?
  b. Position with reference to prominent buildings.
  c. At junction of what streets.
II. Its history.
  a. When built, by whom, etc.
  b. Its purpose.
  c. Its cost.
III. Its exterior form, in general and in detail—use some type.
IV. Its size, in general and in detail.
V. The material.
VI. Its architectural style.
VII. Its interior arrangement.
  a. Main floor.
  b. Stage.
  c. Balconies and boxes.
  d. Method of ventilation.
  e. Method of lighting.
VIII. Its adaptation to its purpose.
IX. The style of finish.
  a. Outside—1. Cornice; 2. Tower; 3. Paint, etc.
  b. Inside—1. Natural wood; 2. Frescoes; 3. Upholstery, etc.
X. The furniture.
XI. Comparison with other buildings of its kind.
  a. In cost.
  b. In architectural beauty.
  c. In convenience.
XII. Conclusion.—Its value to the town as an educating influence.

This done, the next step is that of expanding these divisions and subdivisions by reading, reflection, and conversation. For instance, on I. the writer will need to study a map of the town and to observe the building from different points of view. On II. he will need to consult local histories, old files of newspapers and the like, and to converse with older citizens. The expansion of III., IV., and V. must depend mainly on the writer's observation and imagination. On VI. he will perhaps need to consult some encyclopædia or work on architecture. To expand some subheads of VII. he may need to consult a practical artizan who is familiar with the building. On VIII., IX., and X. he must expand by means of reflection, conversation, and observation. Wherever technical terms are necessary for accurate description he will need to consult technical works or technical workers. XI. will be expanded by all three of the methods first suggested, while XII. will depend mainly on reflection. As fast as results are obtained by reading, reflection, etc., let each be noted, under its appropriate head or subhead, *with some intelligible catch-word or expression, and, in the case of reading, with the page and volume.* It will readily be seen that when this has been done the real burden of the work on the essay has already been performed. It remains for the writer only to put the ideas already obtained into clear, elegant English sentences and paragraphs, giving his undivided attention to questions of style and form rather than of thought. And, as has been said, this is enough for one mind to do at one time. Good English, to say nothing of elegance, is almost a rarity. A similar method may profitably be used in constructing outlines in Narration, Exposition, and Argumentation. A word, in conclusion, as to the mechanical form of the outline. Too much care cannot be taken to keep divisions and subdivisions distinct. This can best be done by using successively the the Roman, literal, and Arabic notations as in the outlines already sketched.

SPECIMEN OUTLINES.

NOTE.—In illustration of the preceding paragraphs of this chapter, the following outlines are appended. They are not given as models, but simply as illustrations of results that have actually been obtained by the methods already suggested. They are taken *verbatim* from actual essays as these were presented for criticism.

A QUAKER TOWN. (Description.)

I. Introduction.
  a. Causes of special attention.
    1. Sacredness attaching to the name of Quakers.
    2. Historical rôle of Quakers in the United States.
    3. Scarcity of Quakers in bodies.
  b. Means of information.
II. Situation.
  a. Geographically.
  b. Advantages of same.

c. Resemblance of situation to other places.
 1. Historical.
 2. Modern.
III. Inhabitants.
 a. Number.
 b. Disposition.
 c. Habits.
 d. Leading citizens.
 1. Professional.
 2. Business.
IV. Industries and public buildings.
 a. Mechanical.
 b. Mercantile.
 c. Hotels, church, schools, etc.
V. Peculiarities of the town.
 a. Quietness and quaintness.
 b. No need of poor-master, constable, etc.
 c. "Friend"-liness.
 d. Comparison of advantages and disadvantages over other villages.
VI. Conclusion.—Impressions and Reflections.

FIVE YEARS' EXPERIENCE WITH A SUNDAY-SCHOOL CLASS. (Narration.)

I. Introduction.
II. My hesitation about taking the class, and the first Sabbath.
III. The class.
 a. Original members.
 b. Changes.
IV. The scholars.
 a. Personal appearance.
 b. Characters.
 c. Home surroundings.
V. The work.
 a. Difficulties.
 b. Willingness of children to learn.
 c. New perplexities.
 d. One benefit.
VI. Memories.
 a. The Sunday-school hour.
 b. Confidence and good-will of the children.
 c. A death-bed.
 d. A Christmas morning.
VII. Scholars at present and a thought about the future.

CHARACTER OF JOHN E. VASSAR. (Exposition.)

I. Introduction.
II. Who John Vassar was.
 a. Cousin of Matthew Vassar.
 b. Early life.
 c. Conversion.
III. Life work.
 a. Work for souls.
 b. "Shepherd's dog."
IV. Qualifications for work.
 a. Power of endurance.
 b. Magnetism.
 c. Power to read character.
 d. Sanctified common-sense.
 e. Sincerity.
V. Methods of work.
 a. "In season and out of season."
 b. Came directly to the point.
 c. Use of Bible in work.
VI. Character as seen in work.
 a. Forgiving.
 b. Devoted to work.
 c. Prayerful.
 d. Consecrated.
 e. Humble.
Conclusion.

MORALITY OF HOMERIC MEN. (Exposition.)

I. Statement of subject.
II. Respect for gods. Shown:
 a. By submission to their will.
 b. By witnesses of compacts.
 c. By solemnity of oaths.
 d. By punishment of perjurers.
 e. By prayers.
III. Self-restraint. Shown:
 a. By moderation in laughter.
 b. By silence.
 1. On the march.
 2. On the battle-field.
 c. By patience.
 d. Individual instances.
 1. Achilles.
 (a) Impulse to slay Agamemnon overcome.
 (b) Reception of heralds.
 2. Diomedes.
 e. Moderation in wine-drinking.

IV. Family affection. Shown:
 a. By Ulysses.
 b. By Simousius.
 c. By parting of Hector and Andromache.
 d. By Penelope.
 e. In laws affecting suppliants and guests.
 f. In marriage-vows.
V. *Résumé.*

"A TALE OF TWO CITIES." (Exposition.)

I. Introduction.
 a. The author.
 b. General idea of book.
 c. Value of such a book.
  1. When written.
  2. Circumstances of writing.
II. Plot.
 a. Groundwork.
  1. Time.
  2. Condition of society.
  3. Place.
 b. Story of plot.
III. Characters.
 a. Principal: Lucy Manette, Dr. Manette, Mr. Lorry, Madame Defarge, Darnay (Evremonde), Sidney Carton.
 b. Secondary: Jacques (Defarge and three), The Marquis and Brother, Jno. Barsad, Roger Cly, Stryver, Miss Pross, Gaspard, Cruncher.
IV. Criticisms.
 a. Weak points.
  1. Lengthy conversations.
  2. Weak characters.
  3. No definite point.
  4. No particular hero.
 b. Strong points.
  1. Plot and characters real,—except Mr. Lorry and Cruncher.
  2. Strong description and decided views.
  3. Interesting conversations.
  4. Gradual increase of interest.
  5. Excellent English.
  6. French phrases omitted.
 c. In general.
  1. Comparison of man's emotions to nature.
  2. Closes before the story is finished.
V. Impressions left on the reader.
 a. Feeling of reader at close.

 b. Object of writing the book.
 c. Gradual increase of plot from harmless to tragic.
VI. History of book.

ECCENTRICITY. (Exposition.)

I. Introduction.
 a. Value of a painting.
  1. When perfect.
  2. When marred.
 b. Value of character.
II. Society's Laws.
 a. Punishment for infringement.—Hermit.
III. Distinction between individuality and eccentricity.
 a. Definition of each.
 b. Simile of flower-garden, Rose and Weed.
IV. Comparison of Individuality and Eccentricity.
 a. Respective rank and value. Illustration, Oscar Wilde.
 b. Genius ennobles and elevates.
 c. Eccentricity hinders.
 d. Eccentricity used as a cloak to cover vice.
V. *Résumé.*

HIGH LICENSE OR PROHIBITION? (Argumentation.)

I. Introduction.
 a. Power of conviction.
  1. Individual.
  2. National.
 b. Our political condition.
 c. Prohibition a conviction.
II. Diverse methods among temperance workers.
 a. Extreme prohibitionists.
 b. Partisan slaves.
 c. High-license advocates.
III. Arguments of advocates of high license.
 a. Legislation does not change character.
 b. Reforms should be gradual.
 c. Half loaf better than nothing.
 d. No compromise, to abolish part of an evil when unable to do more.
 e. Successive steps to prohibition.
  1. No sale to minors.
  2. No sale to drunkards.
  3. No sale of adulterated liquors.
  4. High license.
  5. Prohibition.
 f. Close low groggeries.
 g. Revenue.

IV. Arguments against high license.
 a. Moral and legal forces should be combined.
 b. Wickedness of action may be suppressed by law, not sinfulness of disposition.
 c. High license centralizes and strengthens the rum power.
 d. Gilds the traffic with respectability.
 e. Increases gambling.
 f. Does not succeed in closing low dram-shops.
 g. High license a failure in practice—Hon. H. W. Hardy —Hon. J. B. Finch.
 h. Wrong in principle.

V. Conclusion.—Quotation from Cook.

SUGGESTION OF ESSAY THEMES FOR A SCHOOL YEAR.

Note—The following arrangement of general themes has been found practical and progressive:—

FIRST TERM.

1. A description of some object or collection of objects which the writer has actually seen.
2. An argumentative essay.
3. A narration of some personal experience, real or imaginary.

SECOND TERM.

1. An exposition of some historical or fictitious character.
2. An argumentative essay.
3. A book-review.

THIRD TERM.

1. An imaginary argumentative conversation between two or more persons.
2. A paraphrase of some selection of standard verse in elegant and accurate prose.
3. A paraphrase of some selection of standard prose in heroic pentameter.

CHAPTER III.

DESCRIPTION.

COMPOSITION may be divided into Description, Narration, Exposition, Persuasion or Argumentation, and Versification. These different kinds of composition, respectively, may be aided by the use of certain general devices, and are equally liable to be marred by certain general blemishes. To state and illustrate these devices, and to warn against these general errors, is the object of this chapter and of those that immediately follow.

A mistaken idea of the dignity of descriptive writing is more or less prevalent. Students are apt to be satisfied with nothing less than the exposition of abstract ideas and profound generalities; a tendency that too often results in the iteration of the merest platitudes. They forget that there is no higher attainment in literature, none which has given to its possessors more lasting fame, than the ability to make pen-pictures—to so represent a scene in words that the reader becomes, for the time, an actual observer. Every community, every class in school or college, has those who can ably maintain an argument or fairly expound an abstract idea; but masters of description are rare.

The ideal, in Description, is so to represent the object or objects described that the same or similar impressions shall be made upon the mind of the reader as were produced by the actual object upon the mind of the observer. In other words, the first essential is vividness. In securing this vividness, certain methods are helpful.

1. *The reader should gain a perfectly clear and permanent idea of the general shape of the object described.* This impression of shape is one of the first that the mind re-

ceives when confronting any object, and it is most clearly conveyed by means of some well-known type or symbol. For example, in shape, Italy is likened to a boot, or to the letter *L*; the earth, to an orange; a building, to the letter *T*; a constellation, to a dipper; a piece of land, to a wedge, and so on. *The only requisite* is that the symbol selected be one that is generally understood. The following passages will illustrate the force of this suggestion (the italics are ours):—

"The floor was composed of earth mixed with lime, trodden into a hard substance, such as is often employed in flooring our modern barns. For about one quarter of the length of the apartment the floor was raised by a step, and this space, which was called the dais, was occupied only by the principal members of the family and visitors of distinction. For this purpose, a table richly covered with scarlet cloth was placed transversely across the platform, from the middle of which ran the longer and lower board, at which the domestics and inferior persons fed, down towards the bottom of the hall. The whole resembled *the form of the letter T*, or some of those ancient dinner-tables which, arranged on the same principles, may be still seen in the antique colleges of Oxford or Cambridge. Massive chairs and settles of carved oak were placed upon the dais, and over these seats and the more elevated table was fastened a canopy of cloth, which served in some degree to protect the dignitaries who occupied that distinguished station from the weather, and especially from the rain, which, in some places, found its way through the ill-constructed roof."—*Description of the Hall of Cedric the Saxon in Scott's "Ivanhoe."*

"The scene was singularly romantic. On the verge of a wood, which approached to within a mile of the town of Ashby, was an extensive meadow, of the finest and most beautiful green turf, surrounded on one side by the forest, and fringed on the other by straggling oak-trees, some of which had grown to an immense size. The ground, as if fashioned on purpose for the martial display which was intended, sloped gradually down on all sides to a level bottom, which was enclosed for the lists with strong palisades, forming a space of a quarter of a mile in length, and about half as broad. *The form of the enclosure was an oblong square*, save that the corners were considerably rounded off in order to afford more convenience for the spectators. The openings for the entry of the combatants were at the northern and southern extremities of the lists, accessible by strong wooden gates, each wide enough to admit two horsemen riding abreast. At each of these portals were stationed two heralds, attended by six trumpets, as many

pursuivants, and a strong body of men-at-arms for maintaining order, and ascertaining the quality of the knights who proposed to engage in this martial game."—*Scott in "Ivanhoe."*

"Those who would get a clear idea of the battle of Waterloo have only to lay down upon the ground in their minds *a capital A*. The left stroke of the *A* is the road from Nivelles, the right stroke is the road from Genappe, the cross of the *A* is the sunken road from Ohain to *Braine-le-Leude*. The top of the *A* is Mont Saint Jean, Wellington is there; the left-hand lower point is Hougomont, Reille is there with Jerome Bonaparte; the right-hand lower point is *La Belle Alliance*, Napoleon is there. A little below the point where the cross of the *A* meets and cuts the right stroke is *La Haie Sainte*. At the middle of this cross is the precise point where the final battle-word was spoken. There the lion is placed, the involuntary symbol of the supreme heroism of the Imperial Guard. The triangle contained at the top of the *A*, between the two strokes and the cross, is the plateau of *Mont Saint Jean*. The struggle for this plateau was the whole of the battle."—*Victor Hugo in "Les Misérables."*

2. *Next in vividness to the impression of shape comes that of magnitude.* In stating the size and dimensions of the object, the writer must employ not only absolute units of measurement, such as inches, feet, miles, etc., but also relative units; that is, he must produce an impression of the size of the unseen object by comparing it with that of one with which the reader is familiar. If, for example, I am told that a certain army contained so many thousand men, my impression of the size is vague; but if I am told also that the soldiers of that army, standing close, would just fill a field with which I am familiar, the impression becomes much more vivid. If told that a certain building in Egypt is just as long, three times as wide, and twice as high as an ordinary railway freight-car, most Americans would have a very fair conception of its size. Take the following passage from Dickens's "American Notes" (the italics are ours):—

"Thus, in less than two minutes after coming upon it for the first time, we all by common consent agreed that this state-room was the pleasantest and most facetious and capital contrivance possible; and that to have it one inch larger would have been quite a disagreeable and deplorable state of things. And with

this, and showing how we could manage to insinuate four people into it, all at one time; and entreating each other to observe how very airy it was, and how there was a beautiful port-hole which could be kept open all day, and how there was quite a large bull's-eye just over the looking-glass, which would render shaving a perfectly easy and delightful process; we arrived, at last, at the unanimous conclusion that it was rather spacious than otherwise: though I do verily believe that, deducting the two berths, one above the other, than which nothing smaller for sleeping in was ever made except coffins, it was *no bigger than one of those hackney cabriolets which have the door behind*, and shoot their fares out, like sacks of coals, upon the pavement."

"The cars are like *shabby omnibuses*, but larger; holding thirty, forty, fifty people. The seats, instead of stretching from end to end, are placed crosswise. Each seat holds two persons. There is a long row of them on each side of the caravan, a narrow passage up the middle, and a door at both ends. In the centre of the carriage there is usually a stove, fed with charcoal or anthracite coal, which is for the most part red-hot. It is insufferably close; and you see the hot air fluttering between yourself and any other object you may happen to look at, like the ghost of smoke."

"It was a very dirty winter's day, and nothing in the whole town looked old to me except the mud, which in some parts was almost knee-deep, and might have been deposited there on the subsiding of the waters after the Deluge. In one place there was a new wooden church, which, having no steeple, and being yet unpainted, looked like an *enormous packing-case* without any direction upon it."

"After a night's rest we rose early, and in good time went down to the wharf, and on board the packet *New York* for New York. This was the first American steamboat of any size that I had seen; and certainly to an English eye it was infinitely less like a steamboat than a huge floating bath. I could hardly persuade myself, indeed, but that *the bathing establishment off Westminster Bridge*, which I left a baby, had suddenly grown to an enormous size, run away from home, and set up in foreign parts as a steamer."

3. *Some objects, again, are so constructed that neither their external shape nor their size conveys to the reader a vivid impression of their real form.* This is especially true of those that radiate from a common centre, like a tree, a spider's web, or a wheel. For example, the visitor to the city of Washington, although well informed about its size and external form, is thoroughly mystified by its angular

parks and diagonal streets, until he learns that the avenues all branch out from the capitol as a common centre, while the lettered and numbered streets, run, respectively, parallel and at right angles each to each other; then, immediately, all becomes clear. Often a canal, a river, or a principal street affords the base-line by reference to which the other parts of a town may be vividly described. Countries and continents are likewise described by reference to central mountain chains. The greatest opportunity is here offered for the play of the imagination. The more original and striking the type the more vivid the impression. In *Les Misérables*, describing the sewerage system of Paris, Victor Hugo says:

"Imagine Paris taken off like a cover, a bird's-eye view of the subterranean network of the sewers will represent upon either bank *a sort of huge branch engrafted upon the river*. Upon the right bank, the belt-sewer will be the trunk of this branch, the secondary conduits will be the limbs, and the primary drains will be the twigs. This figure is only general and half exact, the right angle, which is the ordinary angle of this kind of underground ramification, being very rare in vegetation."

4. *Sometimes the object or scene is of such a character that it cannot be seen at one view* and can be clearly described only by representing it under a succession of aspects. This method is known as "the panoramic view." Aside from the necessities of the case, it gives vividness by its resemblance to the actual manner in which such a collection of objects is always seen. In making use of this method the writer must be especially careful to shift the scene completely and distinctly, so as not to commingle and confuse different aspects of the panorama. Take the following selections for illustration:—

"From this delicious spot, the Spaniards enjoyed one of the grandest prospects in nature. Before them was the steep ascent —much steeper after this point—which they were to climb. On the right rose the Sierra Madre, girt with its dark belt of pines, and its long lines of shadowy hills stretching away in the distance To the south, in brilliant contrast, stood the mighty Orizaba with his white robe of snow descending far down his sides, towering in solitary grandeur, the giant spectre of the Andes. Be

hind them, they beheld, unrolled at their feet, the magnificent *tierra caliente*, with its gay confusion of meadows, streams, and flowering forests, sprinkled over with shining Indian villages, while a faint line of light on the edge of the horizon told them that there was the ocean, beyond which were the kindred and country they were many of them never more to see."—*Prescott in "The Conquest of Mexico."*

"Nothing could be more grand than the view which met the eye from the area on the truncated summit of the pyramid. Towards the west stretched that bold barrier of porphyritic rock which nature has reared around the valley of Mexico, with the huge Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl standing like two colossal sentinels to guard the entrance to the enchanted region. Far away to the east was seen the conical head of Orizaba soaring high into the clouds, and nearer, the barren though beautifully-shaped *Sierra de la Maleriche*, throwing its broad shadows over the plain of Tlascala. Three of these are volcanoes, higher than the highest mountain-peak in Europe, and shrouded in snows which never melt under the fierce sun of the tropics. At the foot of the spectator lay the sacred city of Cholula, with its bright towers and pinnacles sparkling in the sun, reposing amidst gardens and verdant groves, which there thickly studded the cultivated environs of the capital. Such was the magnificent prospect which met the gaze of the Conquerors, and may still, with slight change, meet that of the modern traveller, as from the platform of the great pyramid the eye wanders over the fairest portion of the beautiful plateau of Puebla."—*Ibid.*

"Stretching far away at their feet, were seen noble forests of oak, sycamore, and cedar, and beyond yellow fields of maize and the towering maguey, intermingled with orchards and blooming gardens; for flowers, in such demand for their religious festivals, were even more abundant in this populous valley than in other parts of Anahuac. In the centre of the great basin were beheld the lakes, occupying then a much larger portion of its surface than at present; their borders thickly studded with towns and hamlets, and, in the midst,—like some Indian empress with her coronal of pearls,—the fair city of Mexico, with her white towers and pyramidal temples, reposing, as it were, on the bosom of the waters,—the far-famed "Venice of the Aztecs." High over all rose the royal hill of Chapoltepec, the residence of the Mexican monarchs, crowned with the same grove of gigantic cypresses which at this day fling their broad shadows over the land. In the distance beyond the blue waters of the lake, and nearly screened by intervening foliage, was seen a shining speck, the rival capital of Tezcuco, and, still farther on, the dark belt of porphyry, girdling the valley around, like a rich setting which Nature had devised for the fairest of her jewels."—*Ibid.*

"That gloomy-looking prison on your right is a prison for women; once it was a convent for Lazarists: a thousand unfortunate individuals of the softer sex now occupy that mansion; they bake, as we find in the guide-books, the bread of all the other prisons; they mend and wash the shirts and stockings of all the other prisoners. But we have passed the prison long ago, and are at the Porte St. Denis itself. There is only time to take a hasty glance as we pass: it commemorates some of the wonderful feats of arms of Ludovicus Magnus, and abounds in ponderous allegories—nymphs, and river-gods, and pyramids crowned with fleurs-de-lis. Passing, then, round the gate, and not under it (after the general custom, in respect of triumphal arches), you cross the boulevard, which gives a glimpse of trees and sunshine, and gleaming white buildings; then, dashing down the *Rue de Bourbon Villeneuve*, a dirty street, which seems interminable, and the *Rue St. Eustache*, the conductor gives a last blast on his horn, and the great vehicle clatters into the court-yard, where its journey is destined to conclude."—*Thackeray's "Paris Sketches."*

5. *A study of the masterpieces of description in any language will show that these owe their power and vividness mainly to the fact that they are intensely individual.* That is, the scene is represented just as it appeared at a certain point of time. Every detail of color, of light and shade, of form, attitude, and action, is wrought out minutely, giving, as it were, an instantaneous photograph. Thus, by naming a few things many are suggested.

On this point Herbert Spencer says:—*

"To *select* from the sentiment, scene, or event described, those *typical elements* which carry many others along with them, and so, by saying a few things but suggesting many, to abridge the description, is the secret of producing a vivid impression. An extract from Tennyson's 'Mariana' will well illustrate this:

> "'All day within the dreamy house
> The door upon the hinges creaked,
> The blue fly sung i' the pane; the mouse
> Behind the mouldering wainscot shrieked,
> Or from the crevice peered about.'

"The several circumstances here specified bring with them many appropriate associations. Our attention is

* "Philosophy of Style," p. 80.

rarely drawn by the buzzing of a fly in the window, save when everything is still. While the inmates are moving about the house, mice usually keep silence; and it is only when extreme quietness reigns that they peep from their retreats. Hence, each of the facts mentioned presupposes numerous others, calls up these with more or less distinctness, and revives the feeling of dull solitude with which they are connected in our experience. Were all these facts detailed instead of suggested, our attention would be so frittered away that little impression of dreariness would be produced. Similarly in other cases. Whatever the nature of the thought to be conveyed, this skilful selection of a few particulars which imply the rest, is the key to success. In the choice of competent ideas, as in the choice of expressions, the aim must be to convey the greatest quantity of thoughts with the smallest quantity of words."

The following selections will further illustrate this method of gaining vividness :—

"It was his own room. There was no doubt about that. But it had undergone a surprising transformation. The walls and ceiling were so hung with living green, that it looked a perfect grove; from every part of which, bright gleaming berries glistened. The crisp leaves of holly, mistletoe, and ivy reflected back the light, as if so many little mirrors had been scattered there; and such a mighty blaze went roaring up the chimney, as that dull petrifaction of a hearth had never known in Scrooge's time, or Marley's, or for many and many a winter season gone. Heaped up on the floor, to form a kind of throne, were turkeys, geese, game, poultry, brawn, great joints of meat, sucking-pigs, long wreaths of sausages, mince-pies, plum-puddings, barrels of oysters, red-hot chestnuts, cherry-cheeked apples, juicy oranges, luscious pears, immense twelfth-cakes, and seething bowls of punch, that made the chamber dim with their delicious steam. In easy state upon this couch, there sat a jolly Giant, glorious to see; who bore a glowing torch, in shape not unlike Plenty's horn, and held it up, high up, to shed its light on Scrooge, as he came peeping round the door."

"The poulterers' shops were still half open, and the fruiterers' were radiant in their glory. There were great, round, pot-bellied baskets of chestnuts, shaped like the waistcoats of jolly old gentlemen, lolling at the doors, and tumbling out into the street in their apoplectic opulence. There were ruddy, brown-faced, broad-girthed Spanish onions, shining in the fatness of their growth like

Spanish friars, and winking from their shelves in wanton slyness at the girls as they went by, and glanced demurely at the hung-up mistletoe. There were pears and apples, clustered high in blooming pyramids; there were bunches of grapes, made, in the shopkeepers' benevolence, to dangle from conspicuous hooks, that people's mouths might water gratis as they passed; there were piles of filberts, mossy and brown, recalling, in their fragrance, ancient walks among the woods, and pleasant shufflings ankle-deep through withered leaves; there were Norfolk biffins, squab and swarthy, setting off the yellow of the oranges and lemons, and, in the great compactness of their juicy persons, urgently entreating and beseeching to be carried home in paper bags and eaten after dinner."—*Dickens in "Christmas Carols."*

"The family always came to church *en prince*. They were rolled majestically along in a carriage emblazoned with arms. The crest glittered in silver radiance from every part of the harness where a crest could possibly be placed. A fat coachman, in a three-cornered hat, richly laced, and a flaxen wig, curling close round his rosy face, was seated on the box, with a sleek Danish dog beside him. Two footmen, in gorgeous liveries, with huge bouquets, and gold-headed canes, lolled behind. The carriage rose and sunk on its long springs with peculiar stateliness of motion. The very horses champed their bits, arched their necks, and glanced their eyes more proudly than common horses; either because they had caught a little of the family feeling, or were reined up more tightly than ordinary.

"I must not forget the two sons of this aspiring citizen, who came to church in a dashing curricle, with outriders. They were arrayed in the extremity of the mode, with all that pedantry of dress which marks the man of questionable pretensions to style. They kept entirely by themselves, eying every one askance that came near them, as if measuring his claims to respectability; yet they were without conversation, except the exchange of an occasional cant phrase. They even moved artificially; for their bodies, in compliance with the caprice of the day, had been disciplined into the absence of all ease and freedom. Art had done everything to accomplish them as men of fashion, but nature had denied them the nameless grace. They were vulgarly shaped, like men formed for the common purposes of life, and had the air of supercilious assumption which is never seen in true gentlemen."—*Irving in "The Sketch-Book."*

"I threw aside the newspaper, and explored my way to the kitchen, to take a peep at the group that appeared to be so merry. It was composed partly of travellers who had arrived some hours before in a diligence, and partly of the usual attendants and hangers-on of inns. They were seated round a great burnished stove, that might have been mistaken for an altar, at which they

were worshipping. It was covered with various kitchen vessels of resplendent brightness; among which steamed and hissed a huge copper tea-kettle. A large lamp threw a strong mass of light upon the group, bringing out many odd features in strong relief. Its yellow rays partially illumined the spacious kitchen, dying duskily away into remote corners; except where they settled in mellow radiance on the broad side of a flitch of bacon, or were reflected back from well-scoured utensils, that gleamed from the midst of obscurity."—*Ibid.*

"Opposite us is a fruit-stand. The proprietor has a bald head, a long face, and a nose like the beak of a hawk. He sits upon a carpet spread upon the dust; the wall is at his back; overhead hangs a scant curtain; around him, within hand's reach and arranged upon little stools, lie osier boxes full of almonds, grapes, figs, and pomegranates. To him now comes one at whom we cannot help looking, though for another reason than that which fixed our eyes upon the gladiators; he is really beautiful—a beautiful Greek. Around his temples, holding the waving hair, is a crown of myrtle, to which still cling the pale flowers and half-ripe berries. His tunic, scarlet in color, is of the softest woollen fabric; below the girdle of buff leather, which is clasped in front by a fantastic device of shining gold, the skirt drops to the knee in folds heavy with embroidery of the same royal metal; a scarf, also woollen, and of mixed white and yellow, crosses his throat and falls trailing at his back; his arms and legs, where exposed, are white as ivory, and of the polish impossible except by perfect treatment with bath, oil, brushes, and pincers."—*Lew Wallace in "Ben Hur."*

6. *Reference to circumstances inseparably associated with the object described gives vividness.* Take the following:

"After riding a short distance, we came to a spacious mansion of freestone, built in the Grecian style. It was not in the purest taste, yet it had an air of elegance, and the situation was delightful. A fine lawn sloped away from it, studded with clumps of trees, so disposed as to break a soft fertile country into a variety of landscapes. The Mersey was seen winding, a broad quiet sheet of water, through an expanse of green meadow-land; while the Welsh mountains, blended with clouds, and melting into distance, bordered the horizon."—*Irving in "The Sketch-Book."*

"But hark! The Waits are playing, and they break my childish sleep! What images do I associate with the Christmas music as I see them set forth on the Christmas Tree? Known before all the others, keeping far apart from all the others, they gather round my little bed. An angel, speaking to a group of shepherds in a field; some travellers, with eyes uplifted, following a star; a baby in a manger; a child in a spacious temple, talking with grave men; a solemn figure, with a mild and beautiful face, raising a dead girl by the hand; again, near a city gate, calling back the son of a widow, on his bier, to life; a crowd of people looking through the opened roof of a chamber where he sits, and letting down a sick person on a bed, with ropes; the same, in a tempest, walking on the water to a ship; again, on a sea-shore, teaching a great multitude; again, with a child upon his knee, and other children round; again, restoring sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, strength to the lame, knowledge to the ignorant; again, dying upon a cross, watched by armed soldiers, a thick darkness coming on, the earth beginning to shake, and only one voice heard, 'Forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"—*Dickens, in "Christmas Stories."*

"At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape."—*"Sketch-Book."*

> "So close in poplar shades, her children gone,
> The mother nightingale laments alone,
> Whose nest some prying churl had found, and thence
> By stealth conveyed the unfeathered innocence."
> —*Virgil, "Georgics."*

7. *Again, reference to the human feelings naturally associated with certain objects gives peculiar vividness in Description.* Take the following (the italics are ours):

"Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson must remember the Kaatskill mountains. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and *lording* it over the surrounding country."—*"Sketch-Book."*

"They left the high-road by a well-remembered lane, and soon approached a mansion of dull-red brick, with a little weather-cock-surmounted cupola, on the roof, and a bell hanging in it. It was a large house, but one of broken fortunes; for the spacious offices were little used, their walls were damp and mossy, their windows broken, and their gates decayed. Fowls clucked and strutted in the stables and the coach-houses and sheds were overrun with grass. Nor was it more retentive of its ancient state, within; for entering the dreary hall, and glancing through the open doors of many rooms, they found them poorly furnished, cold, and vast. There was an earthy savor in the air, a chilly bareness in the place, *which associated itself somehow with too much getting up by candle-light, and not too much to eat.*"—*"Christmas Carols."*

8. *Different particulars in Description necessarily aid each other.* A pen-picture of the valley of the Shenandoah for instance must involve, and is assisted by, a description of the mountain-ranges on either side.

9. *Sometimes the use of a single word or expression in the form of a figurative epithet illumines a scene* as with a flood of electric light. Carlyle is noted for these master-strokes. Note, also, the following:

(*a.*) "An impious mortal gave the *daring* wound."
(*b.*) "Casting a dim *religious* light."
(*c*). . . . "And ready now
To stoop with *wearied* wing and *willing* feet."
(*d.*) "Why peep your *coward* swords half out their shells!"
(*e.*) "And howling tempest, steers the *fearless* ship."

10. *In general, it is better to use the present tense in description of what has been seen in the past.* This assumes that the picture is actually before the reader, and gives to the writer many advantages in the way of vividness. There is no surer way of deadening a description or of confounding it with a narration than by making continual use of a past tense.

11. *Finally, avoid confounding Description with Narration.* Let there be, in the pen-picture, only so much of narration as is absolutely necessary to introduce or properly to connect the whole.

Summary.—Vividness, then, is often secured by giving a clear idea of shape through some symbol; by comparing the size with that of some well-known object; sometimes by using a radiating type; by making the scene individual in time, attitude, color, etc.; by using the "panoramic view" where this is necessary; by reference to inseparably connected circumstances; by reference to the associated human feelings; by making one particular assist another, and by using the "historical" present tense.

CHAPTER IV.

NARRATION.

IT is often difficult, sometimes almost impossible, to distinguish between narration and description. One often seems to imply the other, especially when description is based on the panoramic view. It should be remembered, however, that narration is to time what description is to space.

Pure description may be defined as the representation of an *aspect* or succession of aspects in relation to *space* at one definite point of time.

Pure narration, on the other hand, is the representation of an *event* or succession of events in relation to *time* during an interval more or less prolonged. Hill defines the theme of narration as "a series of related events occurring in time."*

"The basis of narration," says Bardeen, "is active progress; that of description is rest, abiding characteristics."†

The aim, in narration, is to produce upon the mind of the reader or hearer, in so far as is possible, the impressions that would have been produced had he been a participant in the scenes related.

That such impressions can be produced by the writer, depends upon the fact that the human mind is so constituted that we naturally sympathize with the states of feeling seen or described as existing in our fellows. We exult in displays of strength, whether of body or of mind, almost

* "Science of Rhetoric," p. 86. † "Complete Rhetoric," p. 243.

as much when exhibited by others as when by ourselves. Likewise, we are disheartened or displeased by the accounts of weakness or failure. We are grave or gay, excited or subdued, accordingly as, in imagination, we live over again, ourselves, the scenes of which we read.

Narration has, naturally, two great advantages over description; the first arises from the constant employment of human personality and the appeal to human sympathy. The second is that of continual suspense. In most descriptions, after the ground-plan is well sketched, the reader can easily anticipate and fill out for himself many of the intervening spaces. Not so with narration; the tendencies of different individuals, and the possible result of circumstances in each case are so widely varied that no one can easily foretell just what any actor in the drama will do next. In these two characteristics, personality and natural suspense, are to be found the reasons why narration, especially in the form of fiction, is by far the most popular of all forms of composition.

SUGGESTIONS.

1. *Gain a clear idea of the scene, and change it as little as possible.*

If the successive events in a narrative be represented by a stream, then there must be an expanse of territory, a channel through which that stream may flow. In other words, there must be, expressed or understood, a clear idea of the scene where the events are enacted. As the clear understanding of the whole narrative depends upon its relation to this ground-plan, it follows that the plan must be changed or reconstructed as little, and as seldom, as possible. For example, if the essay be the story of a day's fishing, the circumstances selected should be those so adapted to some general scene that the latter need be sketched but once for all. Or, again, if the narrative be that of a drowning accident, let the successive occurrences be re-

lated, if possible, as they would have appeared to one person viewing the whole from one definite point of observation. A change of scene always tends toward confusion. Carlyle opens the sixth chapter of his "French Revolution" as follows:—

"And near before us is Versailles, new and old, with that broad frondent Avenue de Versailles between—stately-frondent, broad, 300 feet, as men reckon, with its four rows of elms; and then the Château de Versailles, ending in royal parks and pleasances, gleaming lakelets, arbors, and labyrinths."

2. *In order to be forcible, every narrative must have a climax, a culminating point of some kind.* From almost any series of events, however simple, one can generally be selected to which all the rest have contributed, and toward which all centre. Of course, this climax or "catastrophe" of the plot, as it is technically called, will be more or less striking according to the simplicity or complexity of the narrative; but however simple the series of events, the central purpose must be clearly determined at the outset and kept constantly in view. Upon its character, and its relative position in the narrative, must depend largely the selection or exclusion of different occurrences from a series that has really happened.

Only those circumstances should be selected, therefore, that are relevant to the purpose and cardinal in importance. While significant details are most important, and result in giving interest to a narrative, the most common blemish is the mention of commonplace and unimportant occurrences, simply because they happened in connection with those of more importance. To retain the interest of the reader a narrative must not be so filled with unimportant details as to weary the memory. If, for example, the essay is an account of a journey, it is not always necessary for the reader, to know all about the start and the preparation for the start. The ability wisely to omit is one of the first requisites for a successful narrator.

Another violation of this principle is that of undue expansion. If the story is that of a camping expedition, the

reader does not need to know the entire biography of each member of the party.

Another error, confined mainly to those writers of trashy literature whose productions are paid for according to the space that they fill, consists in attributing to persons in certain critical situations forms of expression that would be most unnatural in such a case.

3. *Except in fictitious narration, give notice of a change of scene.* In case it is necessary to shift the scene, as sometimes occurs, let the most careful and formal notice of the change always be given. This suggestion applies especially to those cases where two or more concurring streams of events are being carried forward at the same time. In introducing the sixth chapter, book I., of his "Conquest of Mexico," Irving says:

"We must now take leave of the Spanish camp and transport ourselves to the distant capital of Mexico."

And in Chapter IV., Book III., of the same work we read:

"At the very time when Cortez was busy reconnoitring the valley, preparatory to his siege of the capital, a busy faction in Castile was laboring to subvert his authority and defeat his plans of conquest altogether."

And again, in "Uncle Tom's Cabin," where the two distinct but finally blending streams of events are carried so long separately, we find similar introductions; for example, Chapter XXI. opens as follows:

"Our readers may not be unwilling to glance back, for a brief interval, at Uncle Tom's Cabin, on the Kentucky farm, and see what has been transpiring [occurring] among those whom he had left behind."

Without these formal notices of change, much confusion would ensue. It is to be noted, however, that narration can generally be so constructed as to render such formal introductions unnecessary. This is the preferable method.

4. *Follow the natural order of events.* Observing the cautions already given, the best general method is, of course, to follow the natural order of events. Although

so simple, violations of this principle are not rare. In the experiences of a pic-nic party, a pupil has been known to relate what happened after reaching the woods, and afterward to give the occurrences on the way thither. In the higher narrative form of real history, this clearness of natural sequence is greatly aided by the use of dates. Chronology and geography have been called "the two eyes of history."

5. *Each occurrence narrated should help to explain and prepare the way for the succeeding occurrences.* Sufficient detail and sufficient reference to otherwise irrelevant facts must be included in the earlier parts of a narrative to render the related events intelligible. To return to our illustration of the camping party; the writer must give enough of the characteristics of each member to enable the reader to understand the part taken by each in the development of the narrative.

6. *For the purpose of suspense, the last principle is very often violated at the opening of a narrative.* It is the custom of many eminent novelists, at the same time that they are sketching the principal geographical scene of the story, to lay before the reader some striking situation of the plot. When, therefore, the reader takes up the regular order of events, each occurrence becomes to him, as it were, an enigma in its relation to those already related, and the interest is thus intensely stimulated. The opening chapter of any of the following well-known works will illustrate this principle: "The Antiquary," "Woodstock," "Our Mutual Friend," "Little Dorrit," etc.

Substantially the same method is employed by those historians who introduce their works by stating certain facts and principles in existence at the time of writing, and then trace the origin and development of these through preceding centuries. This principle of suspense will be found equally applicable and valuable, however, in the simpler forms of narration.

7. *The narrative should be complete.* As irrelevant

circumstances should be excluded, so all those that are strictly relevant should be included. Some otherwise admirable narratives have been justly criticised for their incompleteness. "What became of such a one?" asks the reader after finishing a certain story. The simple fact that the question is asked is evidence that the narrative is not complete. And here, again, is seen the importance of an outline. By constructing a preliminary framework, the writer can easily arrange so as not to admit more elements into his narrative than he can fairly dispose of in the time allowed. The practice, sometimes followed, of purposely breaking off abruptly in the midst of a story has only the merit that belongs to mere novelty.

8. *Imaginative narration; the plot must be plausible.* Perhaps no other method of cultivating the imagination is so fruitful as that of narrating imaginary events. Indeed, by this process, nearly every faculty of the mind is brought into healthful action. The outline or "plot" of such a narrative, as it is technically called, does not differ materially from that of a narrative of real events: the one represents what is past and real; the other what is possible. The first requisite in such a narrative is that of plausibility. The writer must constantly ask himself what action, what speech, what results would be natural and reasonable under certain imagined circumstances. It is here that the element of suspense can be used with most striking effect. The common occurrences of daily life are generally too simple and too distinct to permit the writer to arrange them into any strong climax; but once exchange fact for fancy, and he may weave and interweave the threads of his tale till the reader is lured into a delightful uncertainty concerning the outcome; an uncertainty that intensifies his interest till all is made plain by one grand catastrophe.

9. *Historical narration; use summaries and backward references.* In the more dignified and extended forms of narration, such as history, biography, and the like, clearness and force are gained by frequent summaries and backward references, placed, respectively at the beginning and end of successive chapters. Thus, Motley introduces his "Rise of the Dutch Republic" by rapidly reviewing the history of the Netherlands during the previous sixteen centuries; and in concluding his first chapter he summarizes as follows:

"Thus in this rapid sketch of the course and development of the Netherland nation during sixteen centuries, we have seen it ever marked by one prevailing characteristic, one master passion —the love of liberty, the instinct of self-government. Largely compounded of the bravest Teutonic elements, Batavian and Frisian, the race ever battles to the death with tyranny, organizes extensive revolts in the age of Vespasian, maintains a partial independence even against the sagacious dominion of Charlemagne, refuses in Friesland to accept the papal yoke or feudal chain, and throughout the dark ages struggles resolutely towards the light, wresting from a series of petty sovereigns a gradual and practical recognition of the claims of humanity."

Again, the author of that remarkable work, "*Ecce Homo*," introduces a chapter as follows:

"Of the three parts into which our investigation is divided, Christ's Call, his Legislation, and his Divine Royalty or relation to Jehovah, the first is now completed. We have considered the nature of the Call, its difference from that which was given to Abraham, the means which were taken to procure a body of men such as might suitably form the foundation of a new and unique Commonwealth, and the nature of the obligations they incurred in accepting the Call."

Other writers, especially in tracing genealogies, etc., borrow from the methods of Description and make use of some type or symbol, like that of a tree.

This ninth suggestion would seem practically to concern only those writers who are to make literature a life work; but such is not the case. The narration of the simplest series of real events may be essentially a history, and may be greatly aided by this use of reviews, summaries, and types.

10. *Keep concurring series distinct.* Finally, where the occurrences are at all complicated, great care must be given to keep concurring series perfectly distinct. There is no readier means of confusion than to mingle related

streams of events in the mind of the reader before the actual point of commingling has been reached.

Summary. In order vividly to reproduce past occurrences, then, the scene should be distinct and unchanged; the narrative should verge toward a climax or "catastrophe;" notice should be given of any change of scene; the writer should follow the natural order of events; each occurrence should, if possible, help to explain its successor; the natural order may be violated, within limits, for the sake of suspense; the narrative should be complete; if imaginary, the plot should be plausible; if historical, it should be aided by summaries and backward references, and concurring series of events should be kept distinct.

CHAPTER V.

EXPOSITION.

EXPOSITION may be defined, practically, as the statement and discussion of the essential attributes of some abstract or general theme. If all the essential attributes are discussed, the exposition is called "complete;" if only certain selected attributes are discussed, the exposition is called "partial." Hill says,* "Exposition consists in such an analysis of a general term as will make clear to the mind the general notion of which it is the sign." Similarly, Bain defines exposition to be † "the mode of handling applicable to knowledge or information in the form of what is called the sciences."

SUGGESTIONS.

With Exposition in its strict scientific sense, the young writer has little to do. Only years of experience and profound study can enable a man wisely to enter the field of scientific discussion. The narrower field of partial exposition, however, is perhaps the most popular of all the forms of composition among undergraduates. Of the twenty-one actual subjects quoted in Chapter I. (Part III.) every one may fairly be classed under Exposition. The suggestions under this head must be mainly negative.

1. *Careful information necessary.* Although most frequently employed, there is no kind of composition that

---

* "Science of Rhetoric," p. 95. † "Rhetoric," p. 185.

demands such careful and exhaustive reading, study, and definition. In no other field is there such danger of mistaking trite commonplaces and aphorisms for real, original thought. Vagueness and lack of point are the characteristics of too many expository essays. Of course this vagueness is largely due to the common failure to narrow down the expository theme, as illustrated on pages 242–3.

2. *Avoid confounding with other forms.* As a matter of fact, essays in exposition will often be found to contain much of pure description and narration; but while some Description may be necessary in exposition, it should be limited to the least amount required. For example, an essay on "Public Opinion," if intended to be expository, does not need to contain the history of public opinion since the founding of Rome, nor pen-pictures of Grecian institutions.

3. *Suggestive questions.* The accurate treatment of a theme in exposition is so rare, and apparently so difficult to the young writer, that a few suggestive questions may be helpful. "Of almost any abstract subject," says Haven,* "it may wisely be asked: Where is it found? How far does it extend? How long has it existed? How great is its power? Is it useful or pernicious? If both, where and why is it the one, and when and why the other? Is it often confounded with some other subject? If so, what, and why, and how? Is it connected with human conduct, and how? How does it appear by illustration and comparison with other subjects?" etc. etc.

4. *Character sketches; avoid confounding with biography.* Of the different varieties of exposition, two have been found most satisfactory in undergraduate work. The first of these is the exposition of some historical or fictitious character. The constant and common danger here is that of confounding the exposition with narration in the form of mere biography. The pupil flies to the encyclopædias,

"* Rhetoric," p. 330.

gorges his mind with several articles, and then soberly relates to us when and where the personage was born and educated, what was his father's business, what successive official positions he held, etc., and closes with a pathetic description of the great man's death; all of which is not exposition, much less original composition. In fact, pure biography and history almost preclude originality of thought. In sketching a character, reference to such matters as place of birth, parentage, education, etc., should be only secondary and incidental, and may often be entirely omitted. Of course, the biography of the personage must be carefully read as a preliminary step; but that biography should be made the subject of reflection and comparison rather than a storehouse from which the writer may draw a few dry, threadbare facts with which to weary his readers or hearers. Let him rather take up such questions as the motives of the personage; his ideals; how far he attained those ideals; his opportunities, and how he improved them; what he might have accomplished but for certain barriers; what another would have done in his place; his success as compared with that of others in similar spheres, and so on. It will readily be seen that the field is broad enough not to need enlargement by mere narration.

5. *Book reviews; their essentials.* Another variety of exposition, and one of the most instructive forms of composition in which the young writer can engage, is the review of some work of fiction.

While all the suggestions that pertain to exposition, in general, will apply here, certain specific requirements should be noted. The aim of the writer is to produce upon the mind of the reader of the essay the same impressions that would be produced by reading the book. Together with its general treatment, a good book-review should therefore include:

a. The statement of the location of the principal scene in time and place. This may involve very brief description, possibly narration.

b. A sketch of each of the principal characters. The danger here will be that of undue expansion. Indeed, one of the chief merits of this kind of composition is that it helps to cultivate that rare faculty, condensation. A brief quotation from the sayings of the personage, skilfully chosen, may reveal more of his character than pages of description. Take, for example, the "more!" of Oliver Twist; the "I. O. U," of Micawber; or the "Oh, how shiftless!" of the Puritan aunt in "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

c. A brief outline of the plot. Here, again, the writer must beware of undue expansion. He must select only the main points of the story, dropping ruthlessly all details. In an average essay the outline of the plot should not exceed one hundred words, at the most, and may often be confined to fifty. This part of the composition will,—of course, be purely narrative. In critically reviewing a new book for the press, it is of course wise to refrain from giving the details of the plot lest the future reader lose that interest that comes from suspense.

d. A criticism of the characters. Are they true to life? Do they talk and act as real, living people would talk and act under like circumstances? If they are stilted and artificial, show where and why, using short quotations to illustrate.

e. Criticism of the plot. Is it plausible? Are the given results such as would naturally come from the given causes and conditions? If not, show where and why. Is the suspense well maintained to the close of the story? etc. etc.

f. Criticism of the author's style. Is he clear and concise? Does he abound in long, involved sentences, in foreign words and idioms, in provincialisms, in technical expressions, in obscure allusions, etc.? Are his sentences generally suspensive? Are the pictures so drawn as to appeal to popular interest? and so on. This feature of the exposition is the most pure in form and will require the most careful thought.

g. The special object of the book. If it has had a history (and it is a very wise rule not to review one that is less than twenty-five years old), then the development of this point will include both the statement of the object, and of the degree to which the object has been attained.

For example: Dickens' "Nicholas Nickleby" aimed at and secured the abolishment of the Yorkshire cheap schools; "Little Dorrit" was directed against the evils of the debtor-prison system; "Uncle Tom's Cabin," against those of slavery, and so on.

In conclusion, the pupil is cautioned against using the seven points just given as the main heads of his essay-outline. While this might be done, it is equally well, and generally possible, to note these only incidentally, and so to condense them that they shall compose but a minor part of the essay.

Summary. In exposition, then, the writer should inform himself widely; should avoid confusion with other forms, especially biography, in character-exposition; should employ suggestive questions; and should beware of undue expansion.

CHAPTER VI.

PERSUASION.

PERSUASION may be defined as that form of composition designed to influence the belief and the conduct of men according to the will of the writer. "It endeavors," says Bain, "to obtain the co-operation of man's free impulses for some proposed line of conduct by so presenting it in language as to make it coincide with them."*

Of all the forms of composition, this is doubtless the most important, both as a means of mental discipline and as an agency in the practical affairs of life. One may seldom feel it necessary to engage in formal description, narration, or exposition; but there is hardly an American citizen whose interests do not often depend upon his ability to influence the belief and conduct of his associates. Moreover, argumentation often includes all the other forms of composition. As a school exercise, again, persuasion is especially advantageous. In no other form of composition is the pupil thrown so completely upon his own resources. Encyclopædias and reference-works, in general, afford little direct help. In order to argue well upon any but the very tritest of themes, the writer *must* think. Persuasion necessarily consists of two steps: first, the end in view must be made to appear desirable; and, second, the means proposed must be proved to be conducive to that end. These steps are known,—respectively, as Exhortation and Argumentation. Suppose, for example, that the object be the construction, in some town, of a system of public water-works, and that the means proposed be the use of the direct-pressure, or Holley

* Rhetoric, p. 212.

system. Three possible cases may exist: first, a majority of the citizens may unite in believing that the direct-pressure system is cheap and efficient, while only a minority believe the construction of water-works to be really desirable; second, a majority may agree that the construction of such works is desirable, but may differ concerning the most efficient and economical means of accomplishing that end; third, the citizens may be about equally divided between these two views. In the first case the effort of the writer or speaker would necessarily be purely exhortative, in the second case it would be argumentative, and in the third case both combined.

SUGGESTIONS.

1. *Decide clearly as to methods at the outset.* The first question for the writer to decide is, whether one, the other, or both of these methods are to be employed. In real life, this must be determined by a careful study of the circumstances and prevailing opinions in the case; in school and college exercises, the writer may be guided by his fancy; only, in either case, let the decision be clear before beginning to write; otherwise, time and thought will be wasted. Most people have listened to profound discourses intended to prove what the entire audience believed from the outset.

EXHORTATION.

2. *In exhortation, study the persons addressed.* Exhortation must be addressed mainly to the feelings. The writer must therefore use all possible means of becoming well acquainted with the sentiments, prejudices, maxims, and beliefs of the man whom he addresses, as well as of the class to which the hearer belongs. Every period of life, every decade, every country, every locality has its peculiar views and prejudices. To ignore these in persuasive writing is to insure failure. The autobiographies of the world's

most influential persuasive writers and speakers give evidence that this study of the persons addressed has been the secret of their success. They have not addressed their words of persuasion to those images (constructed in the study) of what men ought to be; they have rather adapted their appeals to men as they have found and studied them, in the street, on the farm, and in the shop. Just here is to be found an explanation of the meagre results obtained by many earnest and highly-cultured pulpit orators. They continually address men as they "ought to" be rather than as they are. As a preparation for persuasion, no amount of theorizing can ever take the place of actual personal contact.

3. *Exhortation may proceed by description, narration, or exposition.* The vivid description of a drunkard's abandoned home furnishes to the advocate of temperance one of his strongest appeals. The recital, by Mrs. Stowe, of the woes of one family of blacks proved the strongest of all exhortations for the abolition of slavery. The exposition of the plan of redemption has been the most effective method of winning souls to Christ.

ARGUMENTATION: ITS NATURE AND CONDITIONS.

There is, perhaps, no better definition of an argument than that formulated by Bain, who says: * "An argument is a fact, principle, or set of facts or of principles adduced as evidence of some other fact or principle." For example, the fact that the highest official positions are generally held by educated men is adduced as evidence of the principle that education is profitable.

Two conditions must exist in order to make Argumentation possible: † *a.* "The fact or principle adduced must be admitted and sufficiently believed in by the reader." *b.* "A certain relation of similarity must be admitted to exist

* Rhetoric, p. 229. † Adapted from Bain.

between the facts or principles adduced and the point to be established." To recur to our illustration, there could be no argument unless the hearer should admit that the highest positions *are* generally held by educated men, and unless he should also admit that, on the ground of nature's uniformity, they would continue so to be held. If either of these conditions be absent, the argument must be fruitless. To illustrate further: a farmer may admit that a certain crop not planted during full moon has failed; but unless he admits that a similar relation between the moon and the crop exists from year to year, the fact of failure is not, to him, an evidence that the moon's phases influence vegetable growth. The first step, then, in pure argumentation, is to select as evidence facts that meet these two conditions.

4. *State the question affirmatively.* Negative statement is always weak statement. No man can prove a universal negative. For example, the statement, "Great crises make great men," *may* be proved, but the negative statement, "Great crises do not make great men," could never be proved; for the writer could never be sure that he had become conversant with *all* great crises. Some *one* crisis that had produced a great man might remain unknown.

5. *Expound the question clearly at the outset.* Much so-called "debate" is utterly idle and fruitless, from mutual failure of the parties concerned to make clear definitions at the outset. Men often oppose one another eloquently for hours, only to find at last that they substantially agree, and that they have really been talking about two distinct questions. For example, take the proposition, "Nihilism is justifiable." Before there can be any fair or profitable argumentation, there must be a clear statement of just what is meant by the terms "nihilism" and "justifiable." and this statement must be such as to be admitted by both sides. Otherwise, each debater will direct his blows against some mere image of his own construction, instead of planting them squarely against his antagonist. In practical

life, debate, dispute, and resultant quarrelling might often be averted by exposition.

6. *State fully and fairly the other side of the question.* There is no surer method of producing distrust in the mind of the hearer, and therefore of insuring failure, than for the speaker to assume that truth, justice, and wisdom are entirely on his side, and to begin his argument by belittling the cause of his opponent. This is a mistake too often made in debating societies. The writer or speaker *must produce and maintain* the impression that he is treating his subject fairly. The moment that this impression is changed, that moment his failure is insured. A glance at the opening paragraphs in almost any of the speeches of the world's great orators will confirm this principle.

7. *In strong opposition, state agreement with an opponent.* As a corollary to the last suggestion, it may be added that where strong opposition is expected, from popular prejudice, or other causes, it is essential that the debater cause his agreement with his opponents to appear as complete and as extensive as possible. As an illustration of this, note the wonderful skill with which Antony begins his speech to the rabble after the murder of Cæsar, and after the speech of Brutus in apology for the deed :—

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him;
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you, Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,
(For Brutus is an honorable man;
So are they all, all honorable men,)
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me.
But Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.
Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?

When that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see, that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says, he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honorable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason!—Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,
And I must pause till it come back to me."

Note also the consummate skill of Paul as he appears before the cynical Athenian philosophers : *Acts* xvii. 22–31.

The speaker must win the willing ear of his hearer at any sacrifice. Otherwise he might as well address dead walls.

8. *Anticipate possible objections.* In written argumentation, where the debater is allowed but one speech, any possible objections existing in the minds of those addressed should be anticipated and carefully met. This should generally be done soon after beginning the argumentation, in order to free the hearer's mind from bias before he listens to the main positive arguments. Here the imagination of the writer finds full scope.

9. *Adduce the arguments separately.* By this means not only is clearness insured, but each successive argument secures in the hearer's mind a definite habitation, so that he may carry it and consider it in making up his final decision. While the ordinal numbers may be used for this purpose, it is even better to apply to each argument, if possible, some terse epithet that will easily fix itself in the mind of the hearer. For example, one of the most common arguments in favor of the tariff is familiarly known as the "infant-industry" argument.

10. *Mere number does not give force.* The multiplication of points numerically is often a sign of weakness. The debater who ransacks the universe for arguments is liable to produce the impression that his cause is desperate. A drowning man will catch even at straws.

11. *Arrange the arguments to a climax.* Climacteric writing, of any form, is always the most effective writing. As the attention of those addressed becomes more and more wearied, the mental stimulants administered must necessarily be stronger. And here, again, appears the necessity of a preliminary outline. Without first knowing just what his arguments are to be, the writer cannot, of course, arrange them to a climax. An argument that is essentially weak is doubtless better omitted entirely, but among those that are reasonably strong there is generally much difference in degree.

Exception. One wise violation of this principle should be noted; namely, the placing of one or more of the stronger arguments at the opening of the speech or essay. With arguments, as with individuals, first impressions are very important.

12. *Beware of the fallacies arising from mere association or succession.* The fact that two phenomena frequently occur together, or in succession, does not prove that one is the effect of the other. This fallacy, known among logicians as *"post hoc ergo propter hoc,"* is by far the most common of all. In every political campaign thousands of votes among the laboring classes are changed by the reasoning that, since "hard times" have existed under the administration of one party, therefore those hard times have been *due* to that administration, and there is need of "a change." To illustrate further: the fact that ten men who have used tobacco all their lives have had remarkable health does not prove that the use of tobacco is conducive to health. There may be twenty other habitual tobacco-users who have been life-long invalids.

13. *Avoid confounding proof with illustration.* Almost

anything can be established by a simile, even opposite sides of the same question. Witness the following from a popular novel:—

"He.—'If I wished to tell you how I would dwell in your thoughts, what poet has written anything equal to this half-open burr? It portrays our past, it gives our present relations, and it suggests our future; only, like all parables, it must not be pressed too far or too much prominence given to mere detail. These prickly outward-pointing spines represent the reserve and formality which keep comparative strangers apart. But now the burr is half open, revealing its heart of silk and down. So, if one could get past the barriers which you, alike with all, turn toward an indifferent or unfriendly world, a kindliness would be found that would surround a cherished friend as these silken sides envelop this sole and favored chestnut. Again, note that the burr is half open now, indicating, I hope, the progress we have made toward such friendship. Moreover, this chestnut dwells alone in the centre of the burr. We do not like to share a supreme friendship. There are some in whose esteem we would be first.'

"She—'Mr. Gregory, will you lend me your penknife?' (He complies, and she takes the burr from his hand.)

"'Mr. Gregory, if I understand your rather far-fetched interpretation of this little "parable of nature," you choose to represent yourself by this great, lonely chestnut occupying the space where three might have grown. On observing this emblematic nut closely, I detect something that may also have a place in your parable,' and she pushed aside the little quirl at the small end of the nut, which partially concealed a worm-hole, and cutting through the shell showed the destroyer in the very heart of the kernel.

"'Mr. Gregory, you have been unfortunate in the choice of a burr. Let me select one for you. First, you notice that it lies entirely open; that indicates frankness. Again, the burr contains three chestnuts, which indicates the sharing of one's regard among others, although the fact that one is central and larger shows that there may still be one supreme regard. Under the vigorous blows of Jeff, the driver, this burr has suffered a terrific downfall, and yet notice how faithfully the three nuts have clung together. This teaches us that friends should stick together through the downfalls of life,'" etc., etc.

In a word, it does not follow that what is true of the symbol is necessarily true of the thing symbolized. Because the construction of a good essay resembles that of a frame house, it does not follow that everything true of the house is true of the essay. One object does not

prove the other; it simply illustrates. This method of reasoning "by analogy," as it is called, while it has a certain value, has much more weight, in the popular mind, than is properly its due, and is therefore to be employed with great caution.

14. *Cite only accessible authorities.* In discussing questions that involve the testimony of authorities, in his own or other languages, an appeal to authorities not easily consulted by those addressed, renders the speaker liable to charges of pedantry and subtlety. The hearer is apt to consider such an appeal a mere makeshift employed in the want of sound arguments. "Can you read Greek?" asked a collegian who was being worsted in debate by a layman. "I don't know; I have never tried," was the quiet reply.

15. *In refutation, analyze the arguments of your opponent.* The first step in refutation is, if need be, so to disentangle and arrange the arguments of the opposition that the hearer, who is the judge, may be enabled to see clearly just how many and what these are. And here, if the opponent be one who has written without a careful preliminary analysis, he will be found especially vulnerable. In such cases mere analysis is sometimes in itself a complete refutation. Damaging contradictions and misstatements are often thus brought out, which compel an antagonist to leave the field in shame. Another advantage of this method is, that it enables the debater to meet what is at once the common strength and the common weakness of popular orators. Fox, the most eminent of these, maintained, we are told, that, to the multitude, one argument, presented in five different dresses, is equal to five distinct arguments. His success proves the correctness of his theory; and a study of the speeches of the popular orators of our own day will show that they act, perhaps unconsciously, on the same principle. If, however, one of these silver-tongued orators is met upon the rostrum by an opponent who can clearly show to the audience that they have been listening, not to several strong, distinct arguments, but rather to only one or two, dressed like, puppets,—in as

many different garbs as there are occasions, the result must be evident.

16. *Avoid over-argumentation.* This applies both to positive argumentation and to refutation. In the first case, especially where prejudice is to be met, there is danger of reaction. That which the hearer is not fully prepared to receive must not be urged too forcibly. In refutation, over-argumentation is liable only to magnify in the hearer's mind the weight of the argument answered. Great preparation implies a great undertaking. The speaker who hurls a ponderous refutation at a weak argument is like a builder who should erect a huge derrick in order to lift a small stone; people would infer that the stone must be much heavier than it looks.

17. *Ignore arguments that are very weak.* This is but a a corollary to the last suggestion. By even noticing some arguments the speaker only magnifies what was before insignificant.

18. *Always conclude with a summary.* Though the last, this is perhaps the most important of our long list of suggestions. By its nature, argumentation involves the formation of a decision by the hearer, the judge, after the representatives or the representations of both sides have been heard. In order to form any fair, intelligent decision, he must catch, and carry in his mind, or upon paper, the points made on each side. To enable the hearer to do this easily and completely each debater should conclude with a restatement of his arguments in the tersest language possible. Too much stress cannot be laid on this principle. The summary may be made by citing the arguments numerically, or often more smoothly by weaving all into one closing sentence. By way of illustration, we append several actual summaries taken *verbatim* from undergraduate essays:—

"Inasmuch, therefore, as the Bible is the only book of morals; in view of its great truths and the richness of its literature; inasmuch as it has always been a corrective for sceptical tendencies,—we claim that it ought not to be excluded from the public schools."

"Since, then, intimate acquaintance with books, while it greatly enriches life, at the same time tends to make men forgetful of the great living world, and hence to make them selfish; since it gives us knowledge of human nature by rule rather than by experience; and since the writings are not greater than their authors; since direct knowledge of human nature increases our opportunities for doing good, and is of real value even when it displays the darker side of life; since it opens rich stores of romance and poetry; and since it is obviously a duty to understand the highest creations from the hand of God,—surely human acquaintances and friendships are the better."

"Remembering, then, that the excuse for war is the maintenance of justice, and that justice depends on the reasoning faculties, not on brute force; considering that very many wars have proved ineffectual; that the issue of war, depending upon chance,—is uncertain; that many of the finer qualities of manhood are wanting in the professional soldier; that war assures its own continuance; that as rulers can agree to abide by the trial by war, so they can as effectually appeal to arbitration—in view of all these facts, I claim that war is unnecessary, does not accomplish its purpose, and hence is inexpedient."

"I hold, therefore, that it is not right for our government to grant pensions to strong and healthy men: first, because the country had a right to demand the service of its citizens, and, if injured in no way, they are not entitled to a pension; secondly, because these men have received pay for their services, and as this would release any contractor from all obligation, so also it ought to free the government."

Summary.—In persuasion, then, the writer must decide at the outset whether to use exhortation, argumentation, or both; must study the persons addressed; may make use of description, narration, or exposition; should state the question affirmatively; should expound it clearly at the outset; should state fairly the other side of the case; in case of strong opposition, should state agreement with his opponent; should anticipate possible objections; should adduce his arguments separately; should avoid mere multiplication of arguments; should arrange his arguments to a climax; should beware of the fallacy of association; should avoid confounding proof with illustration; should cite only accessible authorities; in refutation, should analyze the arguments of his opponent; should avoid over-argumentation; should ignore arguments that are weak, and should always conclude with a summary.

CHAPTER VII.

ORAL DISCOURSE: ITS DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS.

THE oration is not a distinct form of composition. In the preceding chapters, the term "essay" has been employed in reference both to composition intended for mere perusal and to that intended for oral delivery. In reality, no distinction is possible. It depends entirely upon circumstances whether any one of the four forms of composition shall come to those addressed from the lips of the author, or from the written or printed page. Argumentation, for example, is made by some authors synonymous with oratory; and yet the great mass of legal argument, especially in civil cases, is never orally delivered. At the same time, any article composed with a view to public delivery, involving, as it generally will, all four forms of composition, should have certain peculiar characteristics.

SUGGESTIONS.

1. *Study the prospective audience carefully before writing.* This all-important preliminary step, already urged in discussing theme-selection and argumentation, is especially practicable in spoken discourse. He who writes only to be read can neither select nor analyze his audience; but, in most cases, the writer for public delivery can obtain, by observation, inquiry, and reflection, a fair idea of the mental acquirements, views, and prejudices of his prospective audience; while, at the same time, he can adapt his composition to the conditions of time and place. Such a preliminary study will enable him to avoid the too common pitfalls of unintelligible terms and references, distasteful propositions, and the like.