

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

NCLC

175

Volume 175

Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism

Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Philosophers, and Other
Creative Writers Who Died between 1800
and 1899, from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations



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Preface

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- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author, work, or topic that is the subject of the entry.
- The list of **Principal Works** is ordered chronologically by date of first publication and lists the most important works by the author. The genre and publication date of each work is given. In the case of foreign authors whose works have been translated into English, the list will focus primarily on twentieth-century translations, selecting those works most commonly considered the best by critics. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication. Lists of **Representative Works** by different authors appear with topic entries.

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John Quincy Adams

1767-1848

(Also wrote under the pseudonym Publicola) American poet, speech writer, essayist, translator, and diarist.

INTRODUCTION

The sixth President of the United States, Adams is counted among the most literary of American statesmen. In addition to his political writings, predominately speeches composed during a lengthy and distinguished public career, Adams also produced notable works of poetry and kept an extensive journal published posthumously as the *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams* (1874-77). Prior to his presidential term, Adams distinguished himself as one of America's finest and most influential diplomats, his political ideas as U.S. Secretary of State under James Monroe providing the central formulation of what was subsequently known as the Monroe Doctrine. Later in his career, as a multi-term member of the United States House of Representatives, Adams bent his efforts toward the abolition of the international slave trade, arguing eloquently against it in a famed case involving the slave schooner *Amistad*. His long poem *Dermot MacMorrough* (1832) is usually considered his most remarkable example of imaginative literature, although the work itself is frequently esteemed for its historical rather than literary merit. A skilled translator, Adams also produced numerous English renderings of Latin and German verse, works renowned for their precision and fidelity to the spirit of the originals.

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Adams was born in Braintree, Massachusetts, to John Adams and Abigail Smith Adams. Part of an illustrious American political family, his father was one of the original delegates to the Continental Congress and subsequently served as the second President of the United States. In his youth Adams joined the elder statesman on an overseas journey to continental Europe, where he was privately educated in Paris between 1778 and 1779; he then studied at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. He interrupted his studies in 1781 to serve as secretary to America's minister to Russia, and he lived in St. Petersburg for two years. His youthful mastery of French presaged a lifelong devotion to learning European languages, while his early political experience set

the foundation for his later career as a diplomat. After returning to Massachusetts Adams entered Harvard College, graduating from the institution in 1787.

Adams's study of law was complete by 1790, and though he worked in private practice as an attorney for several years his principal interests remained politics, diplomacy, and literary composition. His 1792 essay *Observations on Paine's Rights of Man* and other of his political writings of the period elicited the attention of President George Washington and culminated in his first ministerial appointment, as diplomat to the Netherlands in 1794. He was married in 1797, the same year his father took presidential office and he was named minister to Prussia. After settling in Berlin he remained in the Prussian capital through the end of the elder Adams's term.

In 1803 Adams was elected to the United States Senate as a representative from Massachusetts. His outspoken manner as a senator, however, caused a falling out with his party, the Federalists, and he failed to win reelection after a single term. Thereafter, Adams allied himself politically with James Madison and the Republicans. In 1806, while still a U.S. Senator, Adams accepted a post as Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard, a position he held until 1809, when he was appointed U.S. diplomatic representative to Russia by President Madison. He remained in St. Petersburg through the war with England in 1812, eventually becoming the U.S. minister to Great Britain in 1815. Adams departed London in 1817, having been named Secretary of State by President Monroe. In the ensuing years Adams was instrumental in negotiations with Spain and England concerning U.S. territorial expansion into Florida and the Pacific Northwest. His arguments against any continuation of European colonial acquisition or intervention in the Americas would subsequently be referred to as the Monroe Doctrine, although historians note that Adams was almost solely responsible for the formulation of its tenets.

The end of Monroe's second term culminated in the undecided election of 1824, in which four presidential candidates—Adams, General Andrew Jackson, House Speaker Henry Clay, and former Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford—split the electoral vote. Responding to the absence of a clear majority, the House of Representatives was called upon to determine the next President. Having earned the support of Clay, Adams, although he had received fewer votes than Jack-

son, was eventually declared the winner, prompting a feud between Adams and Jackson that would linger for a quarter century. Adams was frustrated by obstructionist actions taken by the Jacksonians during his single presidential term of 1825 to early 1829, which has been generally regarded as a failure. With the eventual succession of Jackson to the presidency, Adams retired briefly from public life only to return to politics as a U.S. Congressional Representative from Massachusetts in 1831, a position he held for the remainder of his life.

An eloquent critic of the pro-slavery Jacksonians, Adams concentrated his political efforts on halting the expansion of slavery in the United States. Over the years he argued successfully against so-called "gag rules" instigated by congressmen from the South that prohibited discussion in the House of matters related to slavery. He also famously argued on behalf of a group of African slaves who had taken possession of the slave vessel *Amistad*. When the case appeared before the U.S. Supreme Court in 1841, Adams convinced the justices to grant freedom to the mutineers, rather than condemning them to execution at the hands of their former masters. A devoted public servant for his entire life, Adams suffered a debilitating stroke on the floor of the House of Representatives in February of 1848 while speaking out against the injustice of the recently concluded war with Mexico, and he died two days later.

MAJOR WORKS

In his *Memoirs*, a thorough and meticulous account of his life and public career, Adams occasionally remarked on his unrealized desire to devote himself fully to the pursuit of literature. His inclination toward literary composition, however, remained a secondary calling, sacrificed to a higher responsibility he felt he owed his country. Still, while much of Adams's writing is strictly political in nature, comprised of a series of public addresses and orations, he also produced a selection of works in poetry and prose on diverse topics. In certain instances Adams was even able to combine his dual inclinations toward literature and public service, as in his ambitious *Report of the Secretary of State, upon Weights and Measures* (1821), an exhaustive history of the science and philosophy behind the uniformity of measurement, written for the purposes of expanding American overseas trade. In other writings Adams pursued his central literary theme of public responsibility. The result of his four-year post as a professor of rhetoric at Harvard, the *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory* (1810) analyze the classical art of rhetoric by examining the commentaries of such antique writers as Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, and Longinus on the subject. Adams champions the rhetorical theory and practice of Cicero in his *Lectures*, particularly emphasizing the fundamen-

tal Ciceronian assertion that oratorical excellence derives from the moral goodness of the speaker, and that public eloquence reflects the orator's predisposition toward civic duty.

For his poem *Dermot MacMorrogh* Adams chose a plot from David Hume's 1762 *History of England* concerning Dermot MacMorrogh, a traitorous twelfth-century monarch of the Irish kingdom of Leinster. MacMorrogh, after being expelled from Ireland by a rival, called upon the assistance of the English king Henry II and rallied an army of Welshmen to conquer his homeland. MacMorrogh's cynical betrayal of his country to personal interests was one that Adams found particularly apt in its parallel to the United States of 1828, in the wake of the election of his rival Andrew Jackson. Adams made little effort to disguise his dislike of Jackson, whom he viewed as corrupt and unfit to lead, and the moral laxity of poem's title character was almost certainly a reference to Jackson, scholars assert. *Dermot MacMorrogh*, therefore, is usually interpreted as Adams's cautionary tale on the subject of tyranny, public morality, and importance of good government.

Of Adams's shorter verse, much of the finest was collected in *Poems of Religion and Society* (1848), while examples of his miscellaneous poetry and satirical pieces, such as the amusing "On the Discoveries of Captain Lewis," generally appeared only in periodical publication. Among his notable literary translations are accomplished English renderings of eighteenth-century German poetry, including the *Oberon* of Christoph Martin Wieland (1799-1801; published 1940) and a selection of verse fables by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1801). Also regarded as praiseworthy are Adams's versions of Juvenal's "Satira VII" (1805; "Seventh Satire") and "Satira XIII" (1801; "Thirteenth Satire"), the latter significant as the first published translation of this Latin work by an American writer.

CRITICAL RECEPTION

In his *Memoirs*, Adams recorded doubts he felt during composition as to the literary quality of his *Dermot MacMorrogh*. Nevertheless, he was generally satisfied with the final product, and submitted it for publication. Reviews of *Dermot MacMorrogh* by Adams's contemporaries, which failed to discern the contemporary relevance of its political themes, frequently registered disappointment. Similarly, early critical estimation of the *Memoirs* often remarked on a lack of spontaneity or profound insight into the interior life of its author, while nevertheless maintaining an overall sense of admiration for Adams and the extent of his public service. Twentieth-century appraisals of Adams's *Memoirs* generally offered a more favorable view. Acknowledging

the work's occasional unevenness of style, modern critics have noted that in certain instances it nevertheless achieves an admirable level of literary artistry, offers perceptive analyses of character and historical incident, and presents discerning self-examination.

With regard to Adams's literary translations, modern commentators have deemed his version of Wieland's *Oberon* masterful, and they have lauded his apt and effective translations of Gellert's witty fables. Adams's published translations of two satires by Juvenal have also drawn scholarly attention, particularly as these pieces reflect the statesman's efforts to expand appreciation of classical learning and literary education in the United States. The Ciceronian principles conveyed in Adams's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory* have also elicited critical interest, particularly with respect to the fundamental influence these ideals exerted on the worldview of Adams and on his endeavors as a writer, speaker, and public official. Additionally, the rhetorical strategies of his legal arguments concerning the *Amistad* case and the volatile moral issue of slavery have been analyzed.

Considered as a whole, Adams's versatility as a writer and his diverse public accomplishments have made him an intriguing figure from the point of view of modern scholarship. While Adams's single presidential term has long been regarded as a paradoxical failure within an otherwise brilliant public career, his historical legacy is instead concentrated on nonpresidential achievements, including his outstanding record as a diplomat and foreign negotiator, his eloquent legal support of the abolitionist movement, his distinction as a man of letters, and his steadfast sense of responsibility as an American patriot.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Observations on Paine's Rights of Man [as Publicola] (essay) 1792; enlarged as *An Answer to Paine's Rights of Man*, 1793

An Oration, Pronounced July 4th, 1793, at the Request of the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, in Commemoration of the Anniversary of American Independence (speech) 1793

"The Dancing Bear" [translator; from "Der Tanzbär" by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert] (poetry) 1801; published in journal *Port Folio*

"The Fly" [translator; from "Die Fliege" by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert] (poetry) 1801; published in journal *Port Folio*

"The Painter" [translator; from "Der Maler" by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert] (poetry) 1801; published in journal *Port Folio*

"The Suicide" [translator; from "Der Selbstmord" by Christian Fürchtegott Gellert] (poetry) 1801; published in journal *Port Folio*

"The Thirteenth Satire of Juvenal" [translator; from "Satira XIII" by Juvenal] (poetry) 1801; published in journal *Port Folio*

An Address, to the Members of the Massachusetts Charitable Fire Society, at their Annual Meeting, May 28, 1802 (speech) 1802

An Oration, Delivered at Plymouth, December 22, 1802. At the Anniversary Commemoration of the First Landing of Our Ancestors, at That Place (speech) 1802

Letters on Silesia, Written During a Tour Through that Country in the Years 1800, 1801 (letters) 1804

"The Seventh Satire of Juvenal" [translator; from "Satira VII" by Juvenal] (poetry) 1805; published in journal *Port Folio*

An Inaugural Oration, Delivered at the Author's Installation, as Boylston's Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, at Harvard University, in Cambridge, Massachusetts. On Thursday, 12 June, 1806 (speech) 1806

A Letter to the Hon. Harrison Gray Otis, a Member of the Senate of Massachusetts, on the Present State of Our National Affairs; With Remarks upon Mr. Pickering's Letter to the Governor of the Commonwealth (letter) 1808

Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory, Delivered to the Classes of Senior and Junior Sophisters in Harvard University. 2 vols. (lectures) 1810

An Address Delivered at the Request of a Committee of the Citizens of Washington: On the Occasion of Reading the Declaration of Independence, on the Fourth of July, 1821 (speech) 1821

Report of the Secretary of State, upon Weights and Measures, Prepared in Obedience to a Resolution of the House of Representatives of the Fourteenth of December, 1819. February 22, 1821. Read, and Ordered to Lie on the Table (prose) 1821

Answer to W. Sumner's Inquiry on the Importance of the Militia (prose) 1823

Letter of the Hon. John Quincy Adams, in Reply to a Letter of the Hon. Alexander Smyth, to His Constituents (letter) 1823

Suggestions on Presidential Elections, with Particular Reference to a Letter by William C. Somerville, Esq. (essay) 1825

Correspondence between John Quincy Adams, Esquire, President of the United States, and Several Citizens of Massachusetts Concerning the Charge of a Design to Dissolve the Union Alleged to Have Existed in That State (letters) 1829

An Eulogy: On the Life and Character of James Monroe, fifth President of the United States. Delivered at the Request of the Corporation of the City of Boston, on the 25th of August, 1831 (speech) 1831

An Oration Addressed to the Citizens of the Town of Quincy, on the Fourth of July, 1831, the Fifty-fifth Anniversary of the Independence of the United States of America (speech) 1831

- Dermot MacMorrogh, or The Conquest of Ireland; An Historical Tale of the Twelfth Century. In Four Cantos* (poetry) 1832
- Speech* (suppressed by the previous question) of Mr. John Quincy Adams of Massachusetts, on the Removal of the Public Deposites, and Its Reasons (speech) 1834
- Oration on the Life and Character of Gilbert Motier de Lafayette. Delivered at the Request of Both Houses of Congress of the United States, Before Them, in the House of Representatives at Washington, on the 31st of December, 1834* (speech) 1835
- An Eulogy on the Life and Character of James Madison, Fourth President of the United States, Delivered at the Request of the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Boston, September 27, 1836* (speech) 1836
- Speech of John Quincy Adams, on the Joint Resolution for Distributing Rations to the Distressed Fugitives from Indian Hostilities, in the States of Alabama and Georgia. Delivered in the House of Representatives, Wednesday, May 25, 1836* (speech) 1836
- Speech of the Hon. John Q. Adams, of Massachusetts, on His Resolution for the Appointment of a Select Committee to Inquire into the Causes of the Failure of the Fortification Bill at the Last Session of Congress. Delivered Jan. 22, 1836* (speech) 1836
- Letters from John Adams to His Constituents of the Twelfth Congressional District in Massachusetts. To Which Is Added His Speech in Congress, Delivered February 9, 1837* (letters and speech) 1837
- An Oration Delivered before the Inhabitants of the Town of Newburyport, at Their Request, on the Sixty-First Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, July 4th, 1837* (speech) 1837
- Speech of John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts, upon the Right of the People, Men and Women, to Petition; on the Freedom of Speech and of Debate in the House of Representatives of the United States; on the Resolutions of Seven State Legislatures, and the Petitions of More than One Hundred Thousand Petitioners, Relating to the Annexation of Texas to the Union* (speech) 1838
- The Jubilee of the Constitution. A Discourse Delivered at the Request of the New York Historical Society, in the City of New York, on Tuesday, the 30th of April, 1839; Being the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Inauguration of George Washington as President of the United States, on Thursday, the 30th of April, 1789* (speech) 1839
- A Letter from Ex-President John Quincy Adams to James Henry Hackett, with Hackett's Reply* (letter) 1839; also published as *The Character of Hamlet*, by Ex-President Adams and J. H. Hackett, 1844
- A Discourse on Education, Delivered at Braintree, Thursday, Oct. 24, 1839* (speech) 1840
- Argument of John Quincy Adams, Before the Supreme Court of the United States, Appellants, vs. Cinque, and Others, Africans, Captured in the Schooner Amistad*, by Lieut. Gedney (speech) 1841
- Mr. Adams' Speech, on War With Great Britain and Mexico: With the Speeches of Messrs. Wise and Ingersoll, to Which It Is in Reply* (speech) 1841
- Speech of Mr. John Quincy Adams, on the Case of Alexander McLeod. Delivered in the House of Representatives, September 4, 1841* (speech) 1841
- The Wants of Man: A Poem* (poetry) 1841
- Address of John Quincy Adams, to his Constituents of the Twelfth Congressional District at Braintree, September 17th, 1842* (speech) 1842
- Address to the Norfolk County Temperance Society, 29 Sept., 1842* (speech) 1842
- The Social Compact, Exemplified in the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; With Remarks on the Theories of Divine Right of Hobbes and of Filmer, and the Counter Theories of Sidney, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, Concerning the Nature of Government: A Lecture, Delivered Before the Franklin Lyceum, at Providence, R.I., November 25, 1842* (speech) 1842
- Liberty Incomplete . . . Letter from John Quincy Adams* (letter) 1843
- The New England Confederacy of MDCXLIII. A Discourse Delivered before the Massachusetts Historical Society, at Boston, on the 29th of May, 1843; in Celebration of the Second Centennial Anniversary of that Event* (speech) 1843
- An Oration Delivered before the Cincinnati Astronomical Society, on the Occasion of Laying the Corner Stone of an Astronomical Observatory, on the 10th of November, 1843* (speech) 1843
- Letters on the Masonic Institution* (letters) 1847
- Poems of Religion and Society* (poetry) 1848
- Memoirs of John Quincy Adams, Comprising Portions of his Diary from 1795 to 1848. 12 vols. [edited by Charles Francis Adams]* (memoirs) 1874-77
- Life in a New England Town: 1787, 1788. Diary of John Quincy Adams, While a Student in the Office of Theophilus Parsons at Newburyport* [edited by Charles Francis Adams] (diary) 1903
- Writings of John Quincy Adams. 7 vols. [edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford]* (letters, poetry, prose, and speeches) 1913-17
- The Diary of John Quincy Adams, 1794-1845: American Political, Social and Intellectual Life from Washington to Polk* [edited by Allan Nevins] (diary) 1928
- Oberon, A Poetical Romance in Twelve Books, Translated from the German of Wieland (1799-1801) by John Quincy Adams* [translator; from *Oberon* by Christoph Martin Wieland; edited by Albert Bernhard Faust] (poetry) 1940
- Parties in the United States* (prose) 1941

CRITICISM

Samuel Cooper Thacher (review date April 1810)

SOURCE: Thacher, Samuel Cooper. Review of *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*, by John Quincy Adams. *Monthly Anthology*, and *Boston Review* 8 (April 1810): 247-68.

[In the following review, Thacher surveys the content and style of Adams's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory*,

noting numerous faults therein, while acknowledging the overall merit of the work.]

We should esteem ourselves altogether unworthy the honour to which we aspire of being numbered among the friends of literature, if we could for a moment suffer our judgment of the claims of a man of letters to be influenced by any feelings of political antipathy. It is the delight and charm of literature, that it affords us a refuge from the tumults and contentions of active life—a spot, where we may escape from the hot and feverous atmosphere, which we are compelled to breathe in the world, and enjoy that repose, which we find no where else; not always, alas! even in the holy walks of theological inquiry. We should feel the same sort of repugnance at introducing the passions of party into these quiet regions, as at bringing a band of ruffians into the abodes of rural innocence and happiness, to mar their beauty, and violate their peace. At the same time, however, in a country like ours, where politicks possess an interest so overwhelming, that he who will not talk of them must be content to pass his days in silence—to say that we have formed no opinion on one who has engaged so much attention as Mr. Adams, would be laying claim to a neutrality, which it is no part of our ambition to possess. We have indeed no wish to disguise our sentiments on the political career of Mr. Adams. We have, on this subject, no sympathy with him whatever. We see and lament that the orb of his political glory has become dark—

Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse:
Without all hope of day.

Samson Agonistes

We offer this free expression of our opinions, lest the praise we may be bound in justice to bestow, should lose its value by being supposed to proceed from political friends. Having then made this sacrifice to the unhappy temper of the times, we proceed to the examination of the work of this gentleman, whose claims to the name of the best read and most accomplished scholar our country has produced, are, we presume, beyond all dispute.

It seems to be generally agreed, that however superiour in philosophy and the exact sciences, the moderns fall far below the ancients in eloquence. The causes usually assigned for this inferiority are examined by Hume in one of his essays, and he pronounces them all to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. There is one reason, however, to which, we conceive, he has not allowed sufficient force. From the changes in our habits, constitution and government, and the more universal diffusion of knowledge, the same effects as formerly cannot now be produced by appeals to the passions. The degree of excellence which any art will attain, may be estimated as certainly and exactly by the effects which its perfection

will produce, as in commerce the quality of any commodity is regulated by the price which it will command. It is therefore because eloquence has lost so much of its efficacy, that it has lost so much of its elevation. If in our courts of jurisprudence the decision of a cause depended on the will of the judges, or if our deliberative assemblies were so constituted, that the fate of an empire depended on the passions of a mob, there would be a sufficient premium offered to induce men to devote themselves exclusively to the art, and the eloquence of Greece and of Rome would be indubitably rivalled. But, says Hume, “it would be easy to find a Philip in modern times; but where shall we find a Demosthenes?” We reply, show us the country where it depends on the eloquence of a Demosthenes to determine whether to march or not against Philip; and the man will in due time appear, who, like him, will make the chains of the tyrant resound in the ears of his countrymen, till they, like the Athenians, involuntarily start up to oppose him.¹

We scarcely know whether to consider it as a subject of felicitation or regret, that the causes which impede the progress of eloquence are felt less forcibly in our own country than in Europe. Notwithstanding the obstacles which the regular organization of parties, and the superior diffusion of intelligence, and a spirit of calculation among our common people, oppose to its advancement, we believe that greater effects may be produced by it among us, than in any nation since the days of antiquity. Nothing, therefore, but inferiority of native genius can prevent this art from regaining something of its ancient pre-eminence. That nature is less liberal of her gifts on one side of the Atlantick than on the other, we presume no one is now child enough to believe. If the opinion were ever seriously entertained by any one, it is now sufficiently refuted by facts. We do not fear to say, (and too much nationality is not supposed to be our foible) that the debates on the British treaty, and on the judiciary, considered as a whole, afforded a finer specimen of oratorical talents than has been witnessed in any deliberative assembly since the days of the senate of Rome. At the same time, however, we are far from supposing, that we have already produced any rivals to the orators of antiquity. With all the vigour and originality which we have seen displayed, there exists a palpable want of that extent and variety of knowledge, which regular study alone can supply, and a most deplorable deficiency of that purity of taste, which is gained only by long and habitual meditation of the great masters of style. Even in the debate on the judiciary, which however, we admit, produced nothing to rival two or three of the finest speeches on the British treaty, there are very few passages to which we could apply an epithet of higher dignity than that of very eloquent and splendid declamation. Perhaps we might take Mr. Randolph as a pretty fair specimen at once of the excellence and defects of our countrymen. In his vague and often un-

consequential reasonings, his coarse invective, and his confused and revolting imagery, we have a striking illustration of our prevailing defects; and in his strong and original conceptions, in the bright and bold flashes of his imagination, and the nervous diction, which he sometimes displays, we have a flattering proof of what our country is capable.

It is the tendency of the remarks we have hazarded, to illustrate the necessity of a more regular and scientific study of rhetoric. The establishment of a new professorship of this science at the university of Cambridge we consider as one additional pledge, that a spirit of literary improvement has begun its career among us. The book before us, therefore, we take up with singular pleasure, as the first fruits of this establishment; and though we will not say that it is faultless, yet it is certainly in a high degree honourable to the talents and learning of the author, and must be of great and permanent utility. For him, who is desirous of finding a compendium of all the best precepts of the ancient masters of rhetoric, adapted to the state of eloquence in modern times, and the particular circumstances of our own country, we know of no book to which we should so soon refer, as to the *Lectures [Lectures on Rhetoric and Oratory]* of Mr. Adams. We shall endeavour to enable our readers to judge of its merits and defects by offering as copious an analysis of its contents as our limits will admit.

Mr. Adams informs us, that by the regulations of the institution he was required to deliver a course of lectures on rhetoric and oratory, founded on the classical theories of antiquity. "My plan, therefore," says he, "has necessarily been different from that of all the modern writers upon rhetoric and belles lettres. It has been partly didactic and partly historical; partly to unfold to you, as matter of fact, the precepts of Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, Longinus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and the rest; and partly to show how much of that doctrine may still be suited to us, amid the changes of language, of manners, of religion, and of government, which in the lapse of ages have been effected by the ever-revolving hand of time." Vol. II. p. 141. For the merits or defects of the general outline of his lectures, it is evident that Mr. A. is not responsible. We shall proceed therefore to examine with what ability and success his plan has been executed.

In his first lecture Mr. A. is employed in settling the definition of his subject, and the boundaries which separate it from grammar and logic. The definitions of rhetoric given by Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian pass in review before him, and he joins with the last of these writers in calling it "the science of speaking well." The reasons on which he vindicates his decision do not strike us as remarkably cogent. He expressly rejects the principal ground on which Quintilian himself justifies

its adoption,—that it includes the moral character of the speaker, as well as the excellence of speech. The reasons on which Mr. A. defends it are its comprehensiveness and its coincidence with the scriptures. But the objection to which it appears to us to be most exposed, is the *want* of the very quality, which recommends it to Mr. A. It confines the extent of the science to *oral* eloquence alone. Whereas we certainly talk familiarly, and we think accurately of the eloquence of compositions, not only never spoken, but not at all adapted to speaking; and no man will say that the orations of Cicero are at all the less eloquent, because we are convinced that none of them were ever spoken in the form in which they now appear. His second reason is founded on a feeling so laudable that we are unwilling to find fault with it. Yet the habit of making the scriptures settle points of criticism and philosophy is a very dangerous perversion of their design. It is founded on the same notion of their verbal inspiration, which Galileo was accused of impeaching, when he maintained that the earth and not the sun is in motion. To say that, because "to be eloquent," and "to speak well," are used in the scripture as equivalent expressions, Quintilian's definition of rhetoric "is ratified by the voice of heaven," is so near an approach to the ludicrous, that we are surprised that Mr. A. should hazard it.

We are hardly satisfied with the reasons on which the definition of Aristotle is rejected. Mr. A. follows Quintilian in giving this definition thus: *Rhetoric is the power of inventing whatsoever is persuasive in discourse.* The words of Aristotle certainly do not necessarily have this meaning; and we are half inclined to suspect Quintilian of giving them this turn in order to make the objection, that they include only one part of the science, viz. invention. The words *may*, not to say ought to be, translated,² *the power of discerning*³ *in any subject what is contained in it proper to persuade.* If this be right, the objection loses its force. For the definition may without violence be supposed to imply, not only the invention of the matter of a discourse, but the arranging and expressing it in the manner best adapted to persuasion; not merely the discerning what is persuasive to us, but seeing it in that connection and under those lights, which will be persuasive to others. The other objection of Mr. A. to the definition of Aristotle, that it does not include the class of demonstrative orations is, we think, also unfounded. For it is certainly the object of the demonstrative orator to *persuade* his hearers to embrace his opinion of the object of his eulogy or invective. Persuasion is therefore his end, though he uses different means from the judicial and deliberative speaker. The discussion is however of little importance; and perhaps, after all, the most unexceptionable definition ever given is that of Campbell, "the art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end."