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THE WORKING PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

*EXAMINED IN THEIR LITERARY RELATIONS
AND ILLUSTRATED WITH EXAMPLES*

BY

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A RESTUDIED AND ~~REPROPORTIONED~~ TREATISE BASED ON

THE AUTHOR'S

PRACTICAL ~~ELEMENTS~~ OF RHETORIC

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THE WORKING PRINCIPLES
OF RHETORIC

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THE
WORKING PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

"I hope that your professors of rhetoric will teach you to cultivate that golden art — the steadfast use of a language in which truth can be told ; a speech that is strong by natural force, and not merely effective by declamation ; an utterance without trick, without affectation, without mannerisms, and without any of that excessive ambition which overleaps itself as much in prose writing as it does in other things." — *John Morley.*

PREFACE.

THE preface to the volume on which the present work is based, written nearly fourteen years ago, forecast and not inaptly characterized the purpose of this new venture, in its remark *à propos* of the old subject of rhetoric, that "old things, in proportion to their living value, need from time to time to be newly defined and distributed, their perspective and emphasis need to be freshly determined, to suit changing conditions of thought." The old subject is newer than it was then; its living value, in life no less than in school, more generally recognized. If along with this the conditions of its study have changed, one element of the change may particularly be noted: the tendency to specialization which a deeper interest always brings. Rhetoric, in its higher reaches, is studied nowadays largely by topics and sections, in which single stages or processes of the art literary are taken up and by a kind of laboratory method carried to any depth or minuteness desired.

A laboratory method, of whatever sort, is not absolutely empirical. Its essence is indeed observation, discovery, experiment; but in its outfit must also be included a laboratory manual, to direct and determine its lines of work. Special monographs and records of research have their place, but they do not take the place of this. There is needed, to cover the whole field, some treatise which, presenting the basal principles on a uniform scale and from one point of view, shall thereby exhibit also the mutual relations and proportions

of the various parts. A treatise of this kind is in its nature both a text-book and a book of reference, something to be studied and also consulted. The specific use to which it is put, and the order in which its parts are taken up, are matters to be determined largely by the teacher and the course. As a laboratory manual it does not profess to embody the complete outfit; while it stands, as a basis of reference and direction, at the centre, it presupposes other things, accompanying, which shall supply the praxis and model-study necessary.

Such a manual as this the author had in mind in preparing the present volume. He has aimed to traverse broadly the field of rhetoric, setting forth its working principles by definition, explication, and example. In his aim have also been included the utmost attainable clearness, simplicity, and sound sense in the presentation. It is not for him, of course, to say how far he has been successful. Some principles — nay, all of them — go deep; they cannot but do so, if their working begins within; but those inner points of human nature to which they penetrate are not beyond the recognition of the undergraduate, and to every writer who attains to a degree of mastery they are consciously present as points both of outset and of aim. Sooner or later, therefore, these vitalizing principles must be taken into the account; they are what colors and finishes the whole work of authorship. A liberal course of instruction is recreant to itself if, cramping itself to wooden rules of grammar and logic, it neglects what may be called the practical psychology of the art, or leaves it to that education which began two hundred years before the student's birth. This, then, is what the author has tried to exhibit: the process of composition traced genetically, through its large working principles, with those living considerations which connect these with writer, reader, and occasion. The book does not set up as an authority, except so far as its statements, fairly tested, prove self-justifying. Of any of the assertions

here made the simple desire is, that student and teacher look at them, give them all possible verification of trial and example, and see if they are not so. One thing further also: that as the upshot of all and each it may be seen how great a thing it is, how truly a matter of ordered art, yet withal how simple and business-like, to write.

There is only one name to give to the point of view thus brought to light. It is the literary. Rhetoric is literature, taken in its details and impulses, literature in the making. Whatever is implied in this the present work frankly accepts. Its standard is literary; it is concerned, as real authorship must be, not with a mere grammatical apparatus or with Huxley's logic engine, but with the whole man, his outfit of conviction and emotion, imagination and will, translating himself, as it were, into vital and ordered utterance. It is in this whole man that the technique of the art has its roots.

Begun as a revision of the author's *Practical Elements of Rhetoric*, the work, as thus contemplated, was seen to be, almost from the outset, so truly a new treatment of the subject that the decision was made to issue it as a new work, of which the other is merely the basis. The exposition is throughout subjected to a restatement for which the author can think of no word so fitting as reportioned; it is brought by its terms and ordering more into the line of scientific literary study as it is pursued to-day and into more rigid consistency with itself. To give in any detail the changes from the former work would serve no useful purpose here. A few of the more salient ones may be mentioned. What was before given in chapters and occasional subdividing sections now appears in books and chapters, the latter being numbered continuously through the volume. Chapters viii. and ix. cover substantially the ground formerly entitled Fundamental Processes. Chapter vii., on Rhythm, is nearly all new. The substance of the chapter formerly entitled Reproduction of

the Thought of Others is incorporated with Chapter xvi., as Exposition of the Symbols of Things. The subject of Persuasion now appears, under the heading Oratory, in connection with its controlling literary type, Argumentation. Whether these changes will all justify themselves is a question that must be left to the judgment of those who have used the older book; they seem to come in the way of the reportioning which the subject has undergone.

The additional matter furnished by the numerous corroborative footnotes will, it is hoped, be of service to those teachers and students who desire further rhetorical reading. Of the value of these notes such names as Earle, Pater, Stevenson, Bagehot, De Quincey, are a sufficient guarantee. No voluminous reading of this kind, of course, can be given; but many wise and weighty remarks from critics of recognized authority are thus gathered from widely scattered sources and made available in connection with the principles to which they apply. The body of these appended readings is especially indicated, at the end of the book, in the Directory of Authors Quoted.

This book, as is intimated above, is contemplated only as part of a rhetorical apparatus, the laboratory manual on which other lines of work are founded. For the praxis work of composition, and for more extended study of models than the examples furnish, the present volume has no room. It is the author's intention, in due time, to publish in a companion volume what is here lacking.

In the reading of the proofs the author has had, and hereby thankfully acknowledges, the much-valued assistance of Professor William B. Cairns, whose suggestions have been carefully weighed and generally followed, though, as sometimes the casting-vote went adversely, no responsibility for mistakes or imperfections should be laid to his charge.

AMHERST, March 4, 1901.

Tabu. i-15; 311-383; 420-597.

TO THE SUCCESSION, NOW GOODLY IN NUMBER, OF THOSE
WHO RECALL FROM THEIR COLLEGE DAYS THE
ROOM WITH THE INSCRIPTION

QVI · NOVIT · NEQVE · ID · QVOD · SENTIT · EXPRIMIT ·
PERINDE · EST · AC · SI · NESCIRET ·

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INTRODUCTORY.

Definition of Rhetoric. — Rhetoric is the art of adapting discourse, in harmony with its subject and occasion, to the requirements of a reader or hearer.

NOTE. — The word *discourse*, which is popularly understood of something oral, as a speech or a conversation, will be used throughout this treatise to denote any coherent literary production, whether spoken or written. The term is broad enough to cover all the forms of composition, and deep enough to include all its processes.

I.

Rhetoric as Adaptation. — To treat a subject rightly, to say just what the occasion demands, are indeed fundamental to effective discourse; but what more than all else makes it rhetorical is the fact that all the elements of its composition are chosen with implicit reference to the mind of readers or hearers. The writer learns to judge what men will best understand, what they can be made to feel or imagine, what are their interests, their tastes, their limitations; and to these, as subject and occasion dictate, he conforms his work; that is, he adapts discourse to human nature, as its requirements are recognized and skilfully interpreted. The various problems involved in such adaptation constitute the field of the art of rhetoric.

This idea of adaptation is the best modern representative of the original aim of the art. Having at first to deal only

with hearers, rhetoric began as the art of oratory, that is, of convincing and persuading by speech. Now, however, as the art of printing has greatly broadened its field of action, rhetoric must address itself to readers as well, must therefore include more forms of composition and more comprehensive objects; while still the initial character of the art survives, in the general aim of so presenting thought that it shall have power on men, which aim is most satisfactorily defined in the term adaptation.

NOTE.—The derived and literary uses of the word rhetoric all start from the recognition of the adaptedness of speech, as wielded by skill and art, to produce spiritual effects. When, for instance, Milton says of Satan,

“the persuasive rhetoric
That sleeked his tongue, and won so much on Eve,”

or speaks, in Comus, of the

“gay rhetoric
That hath so well been taught her dazzling fence,”

he sees, in smoothness of speech and deftness of argument, rhetorical devices that in their place are quite legitimate, and incur reproach only as used unscrupulously. In the line

“Sweet, silent rhetoric of persuading eyes,”

the poet Daniel regards the influencing effect as produced by means other than speech; a not infrequent use of the word.

Distinguished by this Characteristic from the Sciences on which it is founded.—The two sciences that mainly constitute the basis of rhetoric are grammar and logic, both of which it supplements in the direction of adaptation.

Grammar, which deals with the forms, inflections, and offices of words, and their relation to each other in phrases and sentences, aims to show what is correct and admissible usage, not what is adapted to men's capacities. A sentence quite unexceptionable in grammar may be feebly expressed, or crudely arranged, or hard to understand; and if so it is to