

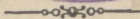
STEPS TO ORATORY

A SCHOOL SPEAKER

BY

F. TOWNSEND SOUTHWICK

PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF EXPRESSION
AUTHOR OF "ELOCUTION AND ACTION," ETC.



NEW YORK .. CINCINNATI .. CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

STEPS TO ORATORY

A SCHOOL SPEAKER

BY

F. TOWNSEND SOUTHWICK

PRINCIPAL OF THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF EXPRESSION

AUTHOR OF "ELOCUTION AND ACTION," ETC.



NEW YORK .. CINCINNATI .. CHICAGO
AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

Dedicated to
JOHN A. BROWNING

COPYRIGHT, 1900, BY. F. TOWNSEND SOUTHWICK.

SOU. STEPS TO ORATORY

E-P 5

PREFACE

THIS collection includes representative selections from the best literature, arranged and condensed for effective use in school declamation.

Part First gives a sufficient outline of the technique to guide the student, but presupposes some knowledge and training on the part of the teacher.¹

Part Second consists entirely of selections, arranged as closely as practicable on a historical plan, but interspersed with examples of colloquial and humorous styles, the study of which will help to counteract the tendency toward a stilted and declamatory manner.

The criticism has been justly made that the so-called old elocution did not take sufficient account of fundamental psychological processes. On the other hand, certain recent methods erred quite as greatly in ignoring the technique of voice and action. If the old school often fostered a mechanical and "elocutionary" delivery, the tendency to rely exclusively on thought and impulse has resulted quite as often in either cold self-conscious intellectualism, or impassioned rant, according to the idiosyncrasy of teacher or pupil. A truly philosophical method will be coördinative from the outset, and a considerable

¹ The author's primer of *Elocution and Action* [New York: Edgar S. Werner] is recommended as a supplementary text-book for students who wish a more complete knowledge of the subject, as well as for teachers who are unfamiliar with the technical problems of the art. An advanced treatise is in preparation.

experience with professional students, representing both new and old methods, has convinced me that some such combination of psychic and physical training as is illustrated herein is the only one which can produce satisfactory results.

The order of study is that which I have used with success. It will be noticed that each step is exemplified by a number of selections. While it may be necessary to anticipate occasionally, the best plan is to dwell upon each step until it is mastered. For instance, in the study of phrasing, while the teacher might correct some obvious fault of emphasis, the pupil's attention should not be distracted from phrase grouping and pause. The teacher should note, however, that though the imaginative and emotional processes are more fully considered in later chapters, they are touched upon in the introductory chapter, and that expression presupposes from the outset the fullest possible coördination of all the psychic processes.

Rightly studied, as the art of interpretation, elocution is a key to the spiritual meaning of all great literature. No man was ever yet truly eloquent in an ignoble cause, and no boy or girl can live in communion with eloquence without being helped to a nobler ideal of personal conduct.

Acknowledgment is due to Messrs. Harper & Brothers and the Century Company for permission to use copyrighted selections. I wish especially to thank Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin, & Company for permission to use the copyrighted selections from the works of Bryant, Hay, Higginson, Holmes, and Whipple, of which they are the authorized publishers.

F. TOWNSEND SOUTHWICK.

The New York School of Expression,
318 W. 57th Street.

CONTENTS

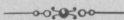
PART I

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. INTRODUCTION	7
II. ATTITUDES OF THE BODY	10
III. LOGICAL EXPRESSION	17
IV. THE MELODY OF EMPHASIS	27
V. INFLECTION	37
VI. THE EYE AND FACE IN READING	51
VII. BREATHING	65
VIII. VOCAL POWER	79
IX. ENUNCIATION	95
X. ORATORICAL DELIVERY	110
XI. GESTURE	119
XII. DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION	135
XIII. DESCRIPTIVE EXPRESSION	148
XIV. DRAMATIC EXPRESSION	179
XV. DRAMATIC ATTITUDES	190

PART II

MISCELLANEOUS SELECTIONS	219
INDEX TO AUTHORS	457
INDEX TO SELECTIONS	461

PART I



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THE art of reading consists in speaking the words of another so as to bring out their full meaning. But words are not important in themselves; they are only the signs of things, of ideas about things, or of feelings awakened by these. That is, we usually speak, not to utter sounds merely, but to tell others what we think or feel, or to describe what we have seen or heard.

Literature is the effort of man to express himself by written language, and to read literature aloud requires not merely command of the voice, but complete understanding of and sympathy with the thoughts and emotions of the author.

When the poet writes : —

I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.

— COWPER, *The Task*.

it is not merely for the amusement of composing verse, but because he hates cruelty and wishes to express his sentiments in language that shall not only be adequate to his meaning, but which, being cast in poetic form, will be more likely to be read and remembered than if it were in prose. So, the reader of these lines must regard his art, not as a mere means of playing with sounds and emotions,

but of teaching the lesson of kindness. To say with real expression: —

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things, both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

— COLERIDGE, *Ancient Mariner*.

the speaker must believe what he says.

Not only must one believe, but he must wish to *make others believe*, and try to read so that they shall agree with him.

He will do this most effectively if he reads or speaks so well that his auditors forget that he is reading at all, and almost imagine that he is speaking his own words. The highest compliment that can be paid to a reader or reciter is not: "How well you recited that poem!" but "What a beautiful poem you recited!" or "I never appreciated that poem until you interpreted it for me!"

That is the ideal toward which our studies should tend, and it is as important for the student of oratory as for the elocutionist. So long as the audience are occupied with the gestures or even the language of the orator, he has failed. It is only when they become so interested in the matter that they forget the manner that he can be said to succeed. But this does not mean that manner should be neglected, for he who has a bad manner will find not only that it distracts the attention of his audience, but that the consciousness of awkwardness or inefficiency is a constant source of embarrassment to himself.

Words are not only signs of ideas; they *picture* or *suggest* pictures.

The words "a mad dog," for instance, call up at once in our minds, not the forms of the letters composing the words, or the mere sounds the letters make, but a mental

"image" or "picture." Some of us who have vivid imaginations could, perhaps, see a very clear picture, with many accessories, such as people running away from the dog, the street or road where the beast is, even the size, color, and other peculiarities of the animal, the foam which flecks his snapping jaws, and the glare of his eyes as he rushes toward us. Perhaps some think they hear the cries of the frightened people or the fierce growls of the creature. This action of the mind in picturing is called imagination. But the thought or vivid image of a mad dog will probably call up something like the unpleasant feelings we should have if we really saw one, just as the thought of a long vacation causes pleasure. These and like feelings we know as *emotions* and *sensations*.

Thought, imagination, and feeling are the inner, or mental processes, which find expression in *voice* and *action*.

If we would express naturally, we must *think* and *feel* naturally.

Rules will help us, but they cannot supply the place of mental action.

In order to express our thoughts as we would wish, both voice and body must be trained to respond to the mind. Ease of manner is attained by command of the body and of the voice.

Our first exercises must necessarily be somewhat mechanical and less interesting than those that follow later, but in no art or accomplishment can skill be obtained without drudgery. Neglect of fundamentals is the cause of half the failures in life.

In this book we have no space for explaining the reasons for all our exercises, but the student may be sure that they have been tested by practical experience, and that, if faithfully practiced, they will lead to success.

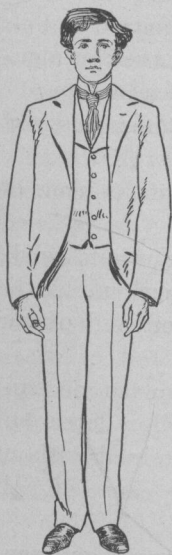
CHAPTER II

ATTITUDES OF THE BODY

“ATTENTION” OR “RESPECT”

EXERCISE I

BRING the heels together and stand perfectly straight, as a soldier would, with arms at the sides, weight not on the heels, but on the middle of the foot, “eyes front.” Avoid stiffness, but try to feel as tall as possible.



EXERCISE II

(1) Inhale through the nostrils slowly, filling the lungs from the waist to the top of the chest, but without lifting the shoulders. (2) Hold the breath. (3) Slowly exhale. Imagine you inhale the perfume of a rose. Be careful not to protrude the stomach when breathing, but rather to draw it in.

EXERCISE III

Breathing in the same way, (1) rise slowly but gently, as if trying to reach the ceiling with your head, until the heels are as high off the floor as possible without loss of balance. (2) Keep this position and hold the breath. Imagine that the breath in your lungs holds you up as

the hydrogen would raise a balloon. (3) As you exhale, come back to the original position.

The Attitude of Attention or Respect is preliminary to the bow. In practising for public appearance, it is well to walk forward a few steps, as you would on the platform, then bring the heels together as you face your audience.

EXERCISE IV

BOWING

Standing as before, bend the head slowly, glancing from one to another of an imaginary audience as you do so. Do not drop the eyes to the floor. The trunk or torso should have a slight sympathetic inclination. The orator's manner should always be dignified. On the platform he first bows to the presiding officer, then to the audience. If the auditorium is of considerable size, or if he is received with especial applause, he may find it necessary to bow several times, to the right, left, balconies, etc., but without good reason he would do better to confine himself to a single simple acknowledgment.

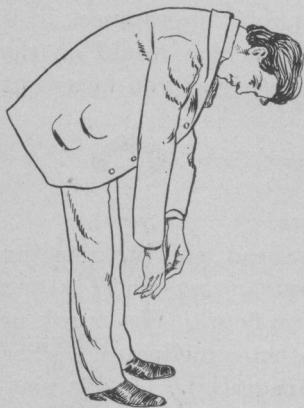
When a lady bows, one foot is retired with the knee bent, and the body sinks back upon it, then returns to the erect position. This action should not be overdone. The elaborate courtesy is out of place on the platform.

EXERCISE V

FOR FLEXIBILITY AND EASE OF THE BODY

(1) Slowly bend the body forward as far as possible, the arms hanging loosely at the sides. Be sure that the movement is a blend of first head, then torso, and that the torso bends in a curve, not as if the body were

hinged or jointed at the waist and neck and rigid elsewhere. (2) Let the body remain in this position until



every joint and muscle of the torso, neck, and arms is perfectly free and hangs by its own weight. (3) Return slowly to an erect position. Repeat several times, or go on to (4) Bend backward in the same way.

(5) Return. (6) Bend to the right side. (7) Return. (8) Bend to the left. (9) Return. (10) Circle the torso, *i.e.*

bend forward, and then carry the torso successively to the right, back, left, front, etc., in

a circle, letting the arms go as gravitation compels them. (11) Return to the erect position, and finally (12) Bow as described above.¹

EXERCISE VI

FLEXIBILITY OF THE NECK

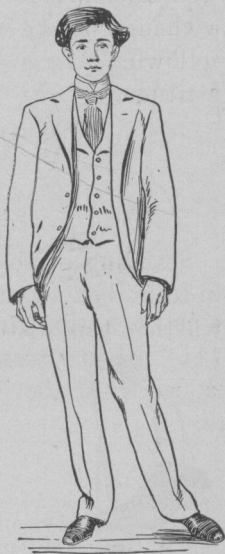
Holding the torso erect, bow and circle the head alone in the same way. Later, combine intonation with this exercise to insure freedom of the larynx in speaking, as directed in Chapter VII.

¹ In the above exercise the hip will naturally sway in the opposite direction from the chest in order to maintain the balance. Do not try to prevent this. If dizziness results, practice more gently and for a shorter time.

EXERCISE VII

THE SPEAKER'S POSITION

Having finished your bow, carry the weight of the body to ONE FOOT ONLY by swaying the hip out at the side, until the median line of the body is over the middle of the foot. This foot is called the STRONG foot, as it supports the body. When this position is taken with perfect ease, the body is no longer stiffly erect, but has a graceful and flexible appearance. The shoulders *oppose*, as we say, the hip, being inclined slightly toward the *weak* or *free* side of the body, while the head again inclines slightly toward the strong side. The free foot, that is, the one which does not support the weight, should be carried outward a little, either laterally or obliquely. Be sure that it rests only on the inner edge and that the free knee is perfectly relaxed. It makes no difference whether you stand on the right or left foot.



With the free foot about opposite the strong foot, the position is normal or neutral. With the strong foot retired, the free foot obliquely in front, the position is expressive of concentration, command, or repose. With the strong foot advanced, free foot obliquely retired, the attitude expresses animation, attraction.

In addressing an audience we usually reserve the last

position for moments when we are especially desirous of winning their sympathy.

Avoid unnecessary movements of the body.

We shift the weight from one foot to another only when there is a reason for it. When a new paragraph is begun or when there is a decided transition of thought, it is well to emphasize the fact by a considerable pause and by a change of the weight from one foot to another. The following exercises will aid in gaining grace and ease in attitude.

EXERCISE VIII

TESTS OF POISE

Standing as above, (1) tap the floor with the free foot, in front, behind, at the side, and across the body, and notice whether this disturbs the poise of the body. (2) Place the free foot at the back of and around the strong ankle, without disturbing the poise. (3) With the free foot around the ankle, throw the arms about freely, or (4) Rise on one foot without change of poise.



Be sure that, in all these exercises, the body does not stiffen.

EXERCISE IX

SWAYING THE HIP

Placing the hands on the hips, sway the hip out over the strong side as far as possible. Then sway to the opposite side until the hip is as far as possible over the foot. Let

the shoulders move as little as possible. Do this in all directions, laterally and obliquely.



EXERCISE X

TRANSITION OF POISE

Change the weight from one foot to the other by gently swaying the hip. Imagine that you address various persons in different parts of the room. For example, standing on the right foot:—

(1) Look toward some one or something obliquely at your left, (2) transfer the weight to the left foot, that is, the foot that is nearest the object of your attention, (3) occasionally raise the arm in the following order, upper arm, forearm, hand, as if to shake hands with the person you address. (4) Slowly relaxing the arm, turn in the opposite direction, and repeat the exercise. Be careful not to

shuffle the feet. Practice turning in all possible directions, advancing the foot, retiring, turning halfway around, etc., but always noticing that the free foot points in the new direction before you change the weight. This does away with the very ungraceful screwing about of the foot after the weight of the body is on it.

EXERCISE XI

Keeping the body erect (with the heels together at the start), (1) advance the free foot as far as possible with the knee bent. (2) Transfer the weight. (3) Spring back to the opposite position, but on the same foot. (4) Spring forward. Practice in all directions. The arms may be as in the diagram, or in any other strong attitude.

