

**AN ORATION**

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

**DEMOSTHENIAN SOCIETY**

OF

**FRANKLIN COLLEGE,**

AT COMMENCEMENT,

1828.

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**BY HON. A. S. CLAYTON,**

GRADUATE OF THAT INSTITUTION.

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AT THE OFFICE OF THE "ATHLETIC" ATHENS, GA.

1828.

## BESOLUTIONS OF THE DEMOSTHENIAN SOCIETY.

1. *Resolved*, That the members of this Society are under the most weighty obligations to the honorable Augustin S. Clayton, for the profound and masterly address delivered before them, and a large assembly of the citizens of Georgia, at the close of the last annual commencement.
2. *Resolved*, That in consequence of the solidity and weight of matter which that address contains, the purity and vigour of the style, to say nothing of the approbation and applause with which the address was received, we feel safe in adopting it as a *model*, and in recommending it as such to others.
3. *Resolved*, That as we believe it will be read with pleasure and benefit by any friend to literature, a committee of three be appointed to present the thanks of this body to Judge Clayton, and request a copy of his address for publication.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### NOTE.

ATHENS, August 9th, 1838.

Sir,—According to the resolutions you will find herein inclosed; and which were unanimously adopted; the undersigned have been appointed as a committee to request of you a copy of your Oration.

It would be unnecessary, sir, for us to tell you how highly it is valued by the Society:

And feeling convinced that it needs no other recommendation than simply reading its contents, we will only assure you, that your fellow members are much gratified with the address and its delivery, and hope you will allow them the privilege of submitting it to the press.

Accept, sir, through us the acknowledgements of the Society, and rest assured of our own wishes for your happiness.

*The Committee,*

{ HENRY CLINTON LEA,  
WILLIAM WILKINS,  
N. M. CRAWFORD.

JUDGE CLAYTON.

### ANSWER.

ATHENS, August 9th, 1838.

Gentlemen,—Your note, of yesterday, requesting for publication, a copy of the Oration delivered by me, at the instance of the Demosthenian Society, has been duly received, and a compliance with your wish could not well be refused, under the undeserved indulgence with which it is accompanied: A copy is therefore submitted.

I am sensibly penetrated by the flattering manner, and feeling approbation, with which the Society have received the exertion made by me, in obedience to their call; a call, doubtless, the result of a too partial confidence.

Please present me to the Society with a most lively sense of gratitude for the marked and repeated instances of respect with which they have honored me; and receive, for yourselves, the assurance of my highest esteem and regard.

A. S. CLAYTON.

MESSRS. HENRY C. LEA,  
WILLIAM WILKINS,  
N. M. CRAWFORD.

## AN ORATION.

FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE DEMOSTHENIAN SOCIETY:

It is our misfortune to live at a crisis when all the qualities of a Statesman seem to have been distorted, and to the accustomed honesty of that character there has succeeded the most miserable destitution of principle, as well as the most ruinous perversion of judgment.

The Chathams, Camdens, Burkes, Foxes, Esqines and Sherridans of the old world, and the Washingtons, Franklins, Henrys, Pinckneys, Jeffersons and Madisons of the new, have passed away. The elevated feelings of the statesman, the high-minded principles of the patriot, and that ardent devotion to the cause of liberty and the rights of man, which shed such a peculiar lustre on the close of the last and the beginning of the present century, have all given way to the blighting passion of speculation. Nations, once guided by science and intellect, and which shone with a splendour unknown to former ages, have gone down behind the smoke and steam of Manufactures, fit emblems of the genius that directs affairs, and every thing presents the sombre hue of engines and furnaces.

All Europe at this very moment, and particularly the country from which we sprung, is in the hands of less system and ability than is to be found in the management of a well ordered corporation.

But our own country presents the most cheerless picture. We have lately been loosened from the grasp of a political monster, and have escaped only with a bare existence. We have witnessed fifteen millions of people heretofore happy and contented, passing from under the operation of a wild experiment, in which every thing has been suffered that passion could inflict, avarice exact, or ignorance deform. The national councils have broken up in a temper of reckless self-will, that has sent a tremor to the very heart of this nation. The fairest portion of the world that God ever smiled upon, has been left agitated to its centre; the place where before all was peace, all was prosperity, all was harmony, is now one wide scene of angry tumult, rancorous jealousy and restless discontent. What country was ever

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more respected for its wisdom? Where was the science of government better understood? When were institutions more flourishing, or laid in a deeper sense of equal rights? When were a people more united and affectionately devoted to the common interest? Where were intelligence, wealth and refinement more rapidly increasing, until the visionary project of making a nation of *weavers* maddened the statesmen of America? And what has been the consequence of this wayward infatuation? All that was proud in sentiment, lofty in character, and dignified in council, have been given up to drapers and woolstaplers, and we are now drifting to some unknown catastrophe, pregnant with every thing but safety.

The relation in which I stand to the Society who have conferred upon me such a distinguished mark of their partiality, and who, with their rival brethren of the other most respectable association, constitute the future hopes of Georgia, emboldens me to submit to their reflection a subject intimately connected with the above remarks; and one which, as they love their country, may one day or other occupy their most lively concern and profoundest thought. WHAT IS NECESSARY TO CONSTITUTE A STATESMAN? In answering this question, I do not mean to descant upon the moral requisites of that character. I will not so trifle with the good sense and virtue of this enlightened audience, as by gravely stating that honesty, patriotism, disinterestedness, and *good breeding*, are essential to the statesman, notwithstanding late events might seem to falsify such a position.

My object is to designate the literary studies, above all the rest, best calculated to form the Statesman, and without a thorough knowledge of which (in great modesty I speak it) no man is prepared to discharge the eventful duties of that station. These studies are but few, as all ought to be where one exclusive object is desired. The man who hopes to succeed in any profession, must bend to it the undivided powers of his mind. Mind, like matter, loses its strength by enlarging its limits; and thousands are the instances in which intellect has lost its vigour by being spread over too wide a surface. All are familiar with the energy of concentrated light; the whole lustre of noonday is impotent when compared with the fervour of the radiant focus. Even the sturdy vigour of metals is weakened, nay destroyed, by extension; and the massy and immovable ore itself may be stretched out until it crumbles with its own frailty, and becomes the proud trophy of a breath. So with the mind—it may reach over the whole illimitable field of science, sparkling with the splendour and variety of its hues, but, like the glitter of gold leaf, it

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is at the expense of its strength; to shine is all its use; one effort beyond that pageant and the charm dissolves.

Geography, History and Oratory then, are the three prime cardinal points of a Statesman's orb. The two first, in the language of a well known profession, constitute the "when and where," the time and place, the legal certainty of politics. In the study of Geography I do not mean that the researches of the student shall be limited to a bare knowledge of land and water, hot springs and caverns, that have their existence no where but in heads as hot and as empty as the wonders they describe. But I would require a thorough knowledge of every country, its relative situation, its population, wealth, resources, physical and moral; the facilities of intercourse and transportation, internal and external, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, science, but above all the genius and integrity of its government, so that if ever called on to impose a Tariff of REVENUE, it should not result in a trick of avarice. He should not be so totally ignorant of his own and other countries' resources, as to lay waste the best interests of the land; or so wilfully corrupt, as to say one thing and mean another, to obtain that by fraud, which he dare not assert by right.

In communities, it is as essential to understand their whole character as among individuals; they have the same vocabulary of vices and virtues. Weak, strong, ambitious, cunning and designing, are just as well understood by them as among a set of sordid manufacturers. No one believes that nations can live independent of each other any more than individuals, unless indeed some large wool-grower or cotton-weaver, from the peculiar nature of his interest, and the opportunity which he sometimes has of voting in its favour in the national Legislature, may entertain such a fanciful idea.

The social character of man is not bounded by his fireside, his neighbourhood, or even his country; it reaches to every region of the world, to which impelled, either by want or inclination, he may choose to ramble. If the fowls of the air, the beasts of the forests, and the inhabitants of the sea, may roam where they please, in search of happiness, it is not too much to claim the same natural right for an intellectual mind, organized with larger powers and capacities, to realize and enjoy the objects of its pursuit. This social character is necessarily imparted to society, and imbues it with all its properties. Nations are at last but so many united individuals, and it becomes as important to know and understand them in that relation as if each was standing out and acting on his own responsibility.

If nations carry on precisely the same operations, among each other, that are to be found in the busy intercourse of men, who does not perceive the necessity of a full knowledge of their varied collective interests, pursuits, customs and genius? And where better is this field of information presented than in the science of Geography? The great end of government is to supply all the political wants of the people, upon the simplest and cheapest terms. It is organized for no other purpose; it is designed to meet and relieve the hard necessities of man imposed by a law of his creation, and any that has not honestly this object in view, is guilty of the worst of frauds, because it is not only faithless to a trust but it is treacherous to misfortune.

To know the wants of man is to know the world, for they are limited alone by that boundary; though he is the creature of circumstance, and convenience may sometimes fix him to a particular spot, he does not thereby forfeit his right to the rest of the created bounty of Heaven; and it is his privilege, whenever it pleases him, not only to convey himself to any other region of the globe, but, unfashionable as is the doctrine, to carry with him the fruits of his labour, to be disposed of as he in his best judgment may think best suited to his interest. That Legislation which attempts to restrain a man, or his property, any further than it contributes to their protection in the honest purpose of government, is wicked, because it is tyrannical; is infamous, because it is perfidious. That legislation which deprives one man of his right to benefit another in his private capacity, is an act of plunder; and justly places the injured party in the attitude of unqualified resistance. For if it is the natural right of man to protect himself and his property from the robber or pirate, it is equally his right to do so against his government if it falls upon him in either of those characters; and that government that takes from one man to give to another for his individual advantage, does filch or force a right, and, like other pirates, is safe only, against a just retribution, in the strength of its own arm.

The diversity of mind and matter to be found in the world, the difference in genius and soil, can never be equalized by human laws: God himself never intended it.

"Order is Nature's first law; and this confess'd,  
Some are, and must be, greater than the rest."

All human efforts then, to counteract this natural inequality in soil, climate and intellect, is as idle as it is presumptuous. What would be thought of that Legislature, which should declare by a so-

lemn act, that all men's minds should be equal, as to wisdom, skill and ingenuity, and that every portion of the land should be equally productive, whether situated in the fertile bottoms of the Mississippi, on the frozen peaks of the Alleghany, or amid the burning sands of Florida? I need not if I could, answer this question. Imagination, with all its immunity of irresponsible falsehood and lawless vagrancy, could not define the proper character of such a folly. And yet, such have been the efforts of the immortal sages of the present day. They have not declared in so many words that such should be the fact, but they have gravely taken upon themselves to control the effects resulting from these diversities. They have said to the enterprize of commerce, you are out-stripping the plodding genius of agriculture, share with her a part of your profits. They have said to the merchant, divide your industry with the hemp and grain-grower. They have said, both to commerce and agriculture, divide your skill and labor with your more wayward sister manufactures. They have said to the planter, contribute your tythes to her greedy and unsatisfying appetite, deceitfully miscalled the "*American System*:" A system in which there is falsehood in its profession, fraud in its principle, and folly in its practice. To the sailor they have said, bring down that daring spirit and fearless courage, the great protection of all our interests, to the humble pursuits of "*Domestic Industry*." To the South, yield up a part of the productions of your fruitful soil to the barren hills and crowded population of the North; bestow a portion of the fruits of your genial climate on the more fertile soil though chilling damps of the West. And thus soil, climate and intellect, have become the subjects of legislation; and those inestimable gifts of Heaven have been clutched by the rapacious genius of speculation, which uniting a want of honesty to a total ignorance of their infinite combinations, their varied relations, and multiplied interests, is plunging the whole political establishment into the most hopeless ruin. Men are considered by these peerless statesmen as mere machines, and the various capacities with which they have been gifted by a benevolent Creator are to be moved and directed, not as God in his goodness has intended, but as they, in their better wisdom may order and appoint.

This country for the last eight years has been scourged by a species of blindfold legislation, and fettered with a policy whose results are all confusion, without system, without patriotism, without principle; and every thing is guided by an eager and insatiable selfish-

ness: Its advocates, perfectly hoodwinked to the best interests of the nation, regardless of its true resources, ignorant of the capacities of other countries, have dashed on as reckless of warning as they have been wilful in outrage; until we have witnessed the late concluding scene, at Washington, winding up the destiny of the government, revolutionizing its whole relations (before prosperous beyond example,) disturbing firm and long-established principles, disquieting the attachments of the people for their constitution, destroying their political affections for each other, overturning public and private confidence, and all to introduce a system tending to personal aggrandizement, doubtful in its result, selfish in its object, limited in its effects, partial in its operation, unjust in principle, and therefore dishonest in practice. It has blighted the most efficient revenue, withered the most flourishing staples of the land, diminished the most prosperous commerce, paralyzed the naval arm of defence, and surrendered to other countries those natural and physical advantages which were rapidly conducting the Union to the loftiest summit of glory. A few more TARIFFS and that ever memorable day so dear to freemen, which celebrates the undying principles of the revolution, will be found only among the curious subjects of a legend or in the mournful stories of tradition.

I can but glance at the treasures of Geography. My time would fail me to exhibit its varied as well as extended usefulness. I can only invite your minds to some general reflections on the subject, closing it with this remark, that Geography describes the HOME of man, and you all know what are the infinite ties belonging to that endearing name. It is the centre of his affections, the seat of his operations, the council chamber of his designs, the magazine of his resources, and the armory of his defence; to know which, as long as countries interchange mutual favors and are subject to mutual discontents, should be the unwearied object of the student, whether looking to the arduous trial of public service, or the humbler though softened duties of private life.

But History displays a richer mine to the Statesman. As the former related to the material concerns, so this study refers to the moral condition of man. As Geography develops his physical resources, History reveals his moral powers. The first relates to things, the last to thoughts; the one exhibits his domain, the other his designs. History is a long story of misfortune; it is the tale of a being who has entered upon existence under a no less calamity, than the

curse of a God. Every wave of his progress has driven him upon some unknown coast, or left him struggling with some untried quicksand. With no guide but his passions, he has been betrayed into the worst of follies; and History tracks him every where upon foot-prints of blood. Avarice, lust and ambition, have continually hurried him into schemes too small for his inclination, and too large for his strength. Respecting no right between his want and his will, between his purpose and his power, he has rushed into strifes too fierce for his vigour, and fallen an easy victim to unregulated desire.

History portrays the excesses of man in colours so strong as to render the distinction between fact and fiction extremely doubtful; and did we not stand upon a promontory connecting us with other times, a life of short but eventful experience, in which human actions, always the same, are continually passing in review before living observation, many a warning lesson of human folly would fail of its usefulness; because more allied to the playfulness of fancy than belonging to the stability of reason. History is the grand science of motives; rightly to understand which, opens to the statesman those thousand secrets of human conduct so often the subject of his wonder, producing the mixed sentiment of resentment and admiration, but of the last importance to society, either in their earnest tones of expostulation, or in the louder voice of rebuke.

He who, in consulting the admonitions of history, follows the tortuous course of ambition with all its disappointments, pries into the secret machinations of revenge with all its bitter consequences, sighs over the sufferings of virtue, fires at the success of fraud, must rise from such a lecture armed against those treacheries, from without; that disturb the repose of governments, and fortified against those temptations, from within, that betray from duty.

History is the sepulchre of *crime*, over which the student may bend in pensive contemplation, and read its epitaph in characters of blood. He may pour out the current of his sympathies upon that object, which extortion has bruised—upon that poverty, which penury has wrung—upon that want, which wealth has oppressed—upon that character, which slander has mangled—upon that innocence, which seduction has murdered—upon that unsuspecting confidence and virtue, which intemperance has betrayed and destroyed:—And rising from these private miseries, he may vent his griefs over those liberties of man, which tyrants have crushed—upon those rights, which

power has violated—upon that peace of mind, which Priestcraft has tortured—upon that quiet of conscience, which dungeons, racks and faggots have visited with unutterable woe.—Still rising to a higher sense of feeling and indignation, he may frown upon that despotism which has ground down whole nations to the dust—laid waste the farrest regions of the earth—ravaged its fields—demolished its cities—subverted its governments, and by fire and sword opened a torrent of commingled blood and tears, “streaming through every age;” and retiring from this gloomy scene, he may learn wisdom from a wretchedness which the hand of time has soothed, and the grave has long since quieted, by warring against those restless elements that ever threaten its recurrence.

The student of History, in the shade of his cloister, may go to every age and nation for counsel; may consult what character he pleases for information. He may take any of the thousand tracks that lead back to times long gone by, and from the right and left of his journey learn wisdom from the triumph of virtue, or experience from the treachery of vice—he may stop here to be exhilarated by the achievement of noble purposes by noble deeds, and he may linger there to deplore the desolated ruin which guilty passion has left upon the field of his excursion. From one he may listen to the anguishing story of misfortune, from another he may be refreshed by the resplendent feats of chivalry. From the Divine he may be warned of the doubtful and faithless path of life, strewn at intervals with flowers to deceive, and every where spread with dangers to destroy. From the Philosopher he may be schooled against the blandishments of fame, the allurements of office, and the seductions of wealth. From the Warrior he may receive the mournful monition that the blood-stained garland may delight the mob, but can never smooth the brow upon which it rests—may fling an admiring world into phrenzy, but cannot subdue one inward agitation. From the Statesman, his lessons will be rich and profound. This character will explain to him the hidden springs of action, that commenced, continued and closed the mighty tempests of revolutions,—how states have risen, beamed in their noon-day glory, and then sunk behind the clouds of oblivion—how the rights of man have been the sport of tyrants—how an easy and deluded people have passed from age to age, through a long succession of despots; the alternate blood-drenched dupes of civil rage and religious bigotry—how at long and

dreary intervals this night of suffering has only been interrupted by short and fitful visions of relief, like some pale meteor that “streaks the autumnal skies,” and, blazing for a moment, sheds a hasty lustre, and then sinks into profounder darkness—how much a greedy ruler may impose upon a patient people—how much a patient people, always inclined “to suffer while evils are sufferable,” rather than encounter the horrors of civil war, will bear from the encroachments of lustful power—how much an outraged nation will endure before it reaches the point of explosion—information which at all times should be regarded as the very safety valve of political pressure, but which seems to be entirely unknown to the infatuated rulers of America; and returning from this pursuit of knowledge, laden with the pregnant stores of his excursion, he will be more than rewarded for the labour of his travel, not only in the rich variety of his treasures, in the consolation of self-approving reflection, but in their more active contribution to the public service.

I come now to the subject of Oratory, the last thing proposed as necessary to the Statesman. I have once before, my fellow members, addressed you exclusively on this topic; and as it is one not only suited to the character of the statesman, but that of the lawyer and divine, in which stations many of you I trust are destined to figure with great distinction, I shall receive your indulgence if a sense of service to you should induce me to repeat some of the ideas used on that occasion.

Oratory, when attentively considered, is extremely curious; and I have my doubts whether it has ever been properly understood, or at least subjected to correct and infallible rules. The first obvious division of the subject is into *Eloquence* and *Oratory*; and the former may again be divided into *Eloquence* with, and *Eloquence* without words. “Between *Eloquence* and *Oratory* there is the same distinction as between nature and art: the former can never be perverted to any base purpose; it always speaks truth: the latter will as easily serve the cause of falsehood as of truth.” The first is a power so completely and exclusively dependent upon passion for its successful effect, that the more it is scientifically cultivated, the more it dwindles. Feeling can never be trained. When connected with language, the slightest conceivable shade of art or affectation will dissolve its spell, and all the after efforts of the speaker will be vain and inefficient.

I have said that words are not necessary to Eloquence, and I repeat, that without them it often woos us with the most touching effect, or wrings us with a more inexorable power.

If its true passion will blaze in the countenance, glisten in the eye, swell and heave in the bosom, plead and implore in the gesture, it matters not whether there is the utterance of a single syllable, the heart of a deaf spectator will kindle with the same rapture as that of the auditor. He will go wherever the orator goes; he will weep and smile with him, melt with his compassions, rage with his resentments, rise with his gusts, tremble in his tempests, and then lull with his calms. His breast will catch the passing spark, and inflame with an ardour that he cannot subdue, and contemns all description: at one moment it glows upon the cheek, and ravishes with delight; at another it substitutes the paleness of death, and agonizes with despair. I might leave the truth of this remark to your own experience, but facts are always interesting when they come to support or illustrate a principle. The speechless eloquence of one who has lost a beloved and valued friend, and is bending over the bereavement in the anguish of grief, indicated by the gushing heart, the streaming eye, and sobbing bosom, utters a voice of deeper woe, and penetrates a sympathising breast with keener emotion, than all the language which art can prompt, charged with studied exclamation, or bursting into the wildest strains. The power of this kind of eloquence is the most resistless, it is the most rapid and transporting in its effect. Under its influence the mind never stops to consider, between its cause and effect there is only the flash of electricity. It has often produced revolutions in states, and then it acts like a conflagration. When Junius Brutus flung himself out of the house of *Colatinus* with the self-murdered body of the fair *Lucretia*, and presented to the multitude the haggard aspect of so much innocence, the ravaged form of so much beauty, the rifled treasure of so much virtue, it breathed an eloquence unknown to the debates of Senates or the displays of science, that sprung all Rome into a fountain of tears, and produced a paroxysm of vengeance that ended only in the utter demolition of the government.

All persons do not feel alike under the same exertions of oratory, and while some are chilled with indifference, others are glowing with extacy, or dissolved in grief. Have you never, from the dull and abortive efforts of a speaker, turned upon his audience, and from the rocking body and swimming eye of one whose heart has been

touched by allusions mournfully connected with some secret sorrows, caught a thrilling eloquence, which, in your own bosom, an age of whining never could have inspired? A speaker may be, and indeed frequently is disgusting; but by the aid of susceptibilities not his own, by drawing upon the passions of others which he cannot feel, and feelings which his own unassisted language never would have provoked, an electric shock is produced, and suddenly communicated from bosom to bosom, until it rushes over the sympathies in a shivering flood of sensibility. I need not refer you to the place where this kind of Eloquence has often a most triumphant sway. This is Eloquence without language; for it is evident that the speaker's words have had little to do with the sudden tumult of the feelings. Allied to this species of silent Eloquence, is that which comes from an Orator who addresses you in a language you do not understand. Savage nations possess, in an eminent degree, this astonishing and captivating power; and though they use a language perfectly unintelligible, delivered free from all the devices of art, yet our gaze is often rivetted, as by magic, upon the strong and impassioned ardour which beams from their eye, flashes from their countenance, trembles upon their utterance, and bounds from their quick and impressive action. So with regard to orations delivered in the dead languages on literary occasions, to an audience entirely ignorant of their meaning; if the Orator feels his subject, he will make his bearers feel it—they cannot get away from him.

The great secret of Eloquence is, to feel; and to feel strongly; and when this swells with an unaffected force, and flows in a current deep and natural, the Orator and his audience become so identified, that they beat with one pulse, throb with one heart, heave with one bosom, and dissolve with the same sensibility; so that he can frolic with their smiles, sport with their tears, play with their pity, fire their hatred, and indeed enslave them to every passion which he himself displays. I have not advanced the position, that words are not necessary to the character of true oratory, with any intention of leaving the impression that its great and signal purposes may be accomplished without them. Far otherwise. My object is to convey this idea, that passion is the vehicle through which the language must be vented; and that this gives a peculiar energy to the delivery, varied attitudes to the body, force of expression to the countenance, all of which enter into the wonderful effect of Eloquence, and are as necessary to be studied and understood as the



oratory of language: That passion may become eloquence, and that of the highest order, without words; but that words, no matter of what description, will never be eloquence without passion. You may take the most correct and exalted principles, such as reason will readily own, clothe them in language adorned with every grace, approved by the most critical taste and judgment, and pass them through a cold, dull and vapid enunciation, and the heart will be frozen up against all influence from their otherwise most meritorious character: But let these same principles, or indeed others greatly their inferior, in point of truth, sentiment or style, thunder through the strong and mighty energies of feeling, and like the rapid and angry blaze of electricity, they will strike at every discharge, blast at every flash, and rive at every peal. This fact is often illustrated from every field in which oratory flourishes, but in none so conspicuously as from the pulpit. Often have you seen a genius rise in that place with the most cultivated mind, the most classic taste, the most refined and practised judgment; but whose imagination, wan and meagre, has been withered in the shade of a College; the fires of whose fancy have been extinguished by the rules of art, or smothered in the cold restraints of rhetoric: He essays for a moment to glimmer upon you in the twilight of careful arrangement, or warm you by the cautious method of the schools—but all in vain; you fall asleep in the wintry night of his long-drawn inferences, or freeze into torpor by the chilling frosts of his logic. But let a true torch of oratory kindle upon that same elevation, whose native genius has not been trimmed down by systematic discipline, awed by the frowns of syntax, blunted by the lashings of criticism,—whose intellect has not been overloaded by the lumber of learning, stiffened by the pride of scholastic pedantry, or inflated by the importance of self-wrapt greatness,—and it will play around you with its lambent point, now encircling you with its flame, then scorching you with its fire, until every feeling is in alarm, and every nerve is in agony.

There is a signal event in history, rendered famous as well as familiar by the magic touches of an immortal poet, which illustrates the three orders of oratory I have attempted to define. After Julius Cæsar was slain, and Marcus Brutus had assembled the people to account for the deed, he ascended the rostrum, and casting his eyes over the immense multitude, he beheld a strong, troubled and undulating concourse—All was anxiety—The event had produced a tremulous sensation throughout all ranks—there was a death-like

pallidness upon every countenance,—a short obstructed breathing in every bosom,—a restless murmur struggling for vent, run through the eager crowd, and was about to break out into fury, when Brutus stretched forth his arm; and though it was bathed in blood up to the elbow, and his dagger reeking with the same crimson dye, yet his god-like firmness awed the multitude into the stillness of death. You all know with what majesty he commenced,—how he swelled the tide of his own deep feelings,—how he lifted the strong passions of his hearers upon the same wide current,—how they drifted together; his eye, though melted in pity, beamed through the falling tear with conscious rectitude; his manly countenance rose superior to every fear, and seemed to defy every consequence; his dignity, firmness, and self-poised greatness of mind, was eloquence itself sufficient to have plead his cause; but to these he united a strain of impressive language, uttered in sentences short, energetic and sincere, and when he came to these emphatic enquiries—“Who is here so base, that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude, that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile, that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.” The whole moving mass swelled with one breath and exclaimed “none, Brutus, none;” and when he replied “then none have I offended,” I leave your stronger imaginations to conceive what cannot be described, the effect of this soul-stirring appeal—At the same time imploring the great Ruler of the destinies of this country to suffer the occasion to pass by in which the same address, from its ominous application to the times, may be made over some slaughtered invader of Southern Liberties.

This speech of Brutus was *Eloquence* with words. But when Anthony, by the permission of Brutus, mounted the same fearful station, and addressed the same agitated crowd, mark the effect of oratory as an art. With the most pensive air he rose before the multitude: deep humility pervaded every feature; the heavy heart, the languid eye, the weeping aspect, the feverish countenance, the faltering tongue, all bespoke the most lowly resignation to the fatal deed that had been done; he broke upon them in an accent of the most dissolving pity. “I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.” This was enough to disarm the throng of half its rage. But gently winding himself around their compassion under the guise of great sincerity, he would frequently exclaim, “Brutus says that Cæsar was

ambitious, and Brutus is an honorable man;" then recounting what Cæsar had done, arraying before them his military achievements, a subject which the people of all ages have admired in perfect delirium, he would say, "when that the poor have cried, Cæsar hath wept: ambition should be made of sterner stuff." Still watching the changing countenances and quivering lips of his easy and yielding listeners, would tell how Cæsar loved them, how he refused a crown which had been thrice offered him, saying "was this ambition? I speak not to disprove what Brutus says, for Brutus is an honorable man." Then urging the great disinterestedness of Cæsar, reminding them how once they loved him, and "why should they not mourn for him now?" he suddenly melts into an affected strain of sorrow, and with trembling accent cries "my heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar, and I must pause till it come back!" At this moment the breathless crowd heaved like a wave, and a deep groan spread from centre to circumference. Anthony now found all was safe, he rose with rekindled confidence, and shewing Cæsar's will, which he declared he would not read in pity to the people, whom Cæsar had made his heirs, because he said "it is not meet that you should know how Cæsar loved you;" then glancing on the reeling throng, that fairly sobbed with anguish at the tale they heard, flung himself to the ground, and gathering them around the mangled corpse of Cæsar, snatched up his gashed and bloody mantle, and waiving it o'er their heads, pointed to the rent which each of Cæsar's murderers had made, and shewed the one through which the well beloved Brutus stabbed! It was enough! It sealed the fate of Brutus, and Rome fell into the worst of bondage. History does not contain such another instance of artful oratory, and from its conquest we should learn this solemn truth, that it is as often found under the banner of successful fraud as in the ranks of triumphant justice—and more, we should learn this lesson, that nothing is so unsteady as the popular breath. Never did any one leave a multitude so fixed and devoted to a cause as was this which Brutus left. Never did any one retire with more confidence, though warned by Cassius of the consequence, than did Brutus when he resigned this people to the workings of Anthony. How fatal the issue! And well might Brutus have said, Oh Oratory! what are thy mighty powers? But as much as this same people were torn and distracted by the alternate powers of Brutus and Anthony, they never lost their reason; they were not worked up into ungovernable rage until they beheld the dead body of Cæsar. Though An-

thony had fired them to the highest pitch of resentment, they would not then have committed acts of personal vengeance, but would rather have proceeded to their revenge under the forms of law. When however the lifeless body of Cæsar was dragged out and stretched before them, his pale and manly forehead smeared with blood, his hair disordered and clotted with his gore, his once bright eye glazed in death, twenty-three gaping and bleeding wounds pleading with a pathos no human tongue could utter—When too they reflected that the man who had carried their country's arms to the most exalted pinnacle of fame, had made nations quail, Senates tremble, jarred the world, and all that was great in intellect, glorious in fame, daring in enterprise and grand in execution, had been inhumanly torn from his family, and was then before them a helpless butchered corpse, it was too much for their sensibility. The fury of despair seemed to convulse them, and yielding to an impulse quick and simultaneous, there was a dislosion that whelmed every thing within its reach. This was the power of eloquence without words, the strongest passion of the three, because wherever there is language, there is affection; and this, when discovered, utterly confounds all the rules of Oratory.

Oratory is not the art of persuasion, as defined in the books; such a definition is as inapt as to say that the roar of cannon and blaze of musketry on the battle-field is the art of persuasion. No! it is the Eloquence of war, and conquers by force: so with genuine Oratory, it never stoops to persuade, it subdues by the strength of its arm and the resistless power of its energy. It is always supposed to array itself against inveterate prejudices, obstinate opinions, long indulged convictions, and these are fortified by pride, jealousy, self-importance, and a host of busy passions, that assume the attitude of defiance to the worst and boldest onset of Oratory. Can these be overcome by persuasion? Would any one attempt to persuade an individual out of a gristled prejudice? As well might he be persuaded out of a broken arm or a fractured skull. No! something stronger than this must be employed in either case. Persuasion may obtain favors, may invoke gratuities, may melt the softer stream of benevolence, and occasion it to flow in charity; but if the dominion of falsehood is to be overturned, Oratory must come out in the power of truth that never falters, and the majesty of justice that never cringes. The triumph of persuasion is conventional, the conquest of eloquence is arbitrary, and its exactions are absolute. The first saps

and capitulates, the last storms and destroys: the former yields the honors of war and gives protection, the latter puts to the sword and grants no quarter. Oratory is a charm, and all around it is enchantment. It is inconceivable how small a matter will dissolve its power, and then all its witchery vanishes. When the feelings of an auditory are up to the highest possible degree of excitement, and they are chained to the Orator by the most intense interest and admiration, then is his situation most critical and dangerous, for an unmeaning glance, a faltering accent, a misplaced emphasis, a hesitating look, a stammering utterance, an awkward gesture, an unnatural tone, an affected grimace or drawing cadence will put every thing to flight, and the well earned trophies of an hour may all be lost in the unfortunate accident of a moment.

An Orator should be almost indifferent to his words; at least he should never stop for an instant to select them. His whole dependence should rest upon the strong, constant and vigorous current of feeling which he can pour upon his audience; and if it flows in a correct language, breathing a spirit of independence, enforced by bold and graceful action, and strengthened by elevated thought, the plainer the style the greater the effect—the shorter the sentences the more powerful the influence. This was the Oratory of Demosthenes—this was the Oratory of Patrick Henry, the American Demosthenes; and this is the *Eloquence of Nature*, and belongs to every thing; even the winds and waves, the woods and hills, and their varied inhabitants, can speak this language; and on the subjects to which they refer is often felt and understood with no common pathos. The highly ornamented style, the rich and gorgeous language, the skillfully balanced sentences, the round and finished periods, the neatly constructed phrases and lofty swelling flights, all constitute the *Oratory of art*, it is altogether artificial, and though it often pleases, nay, sometimes ravishes, yet it is nothing but the substitute of the former, and is to it, what the rocket is to the lightning of Heaven; we know and understand it to be nothing but the exhibition of design, and can never consent to become willing subjects of its control. Oratory is a species of melody, and must be set to harmony by a concert of notes of peculiar character, and suited to itself: without them, words and sentences of the most beautiful order and construction may be strung in endless succession, and repeated to the end of time, without any of the characteristic feelings or effects of Eloquence.

These signs of the Art, if art it may be called, are first and always passion or vehemence; and this is not to be forced, but to grow naturally and continually out of the subject—it must brighten the countenance, and give earnestness to its expression—it must sparkle in the eye, and add rapidity and peculiar penetration to its glances—it must produce animated action, evidenced by the force, variety and grace of gesture. Next, the language must be easy and natural, by no means stiff, strained or affected; it must be uttered with great firmness and confidence; there should not appear the slightest shade of doubt or hesitation. Distrust in the Orator, creates distrust in the hearer. This idea should be ever present, that Eloquence is a direct intercourse between heart and heart: and whatever *one* feels and displays the *other* receives and answers.

In the first outset of the Orator, if he evince unsuspected confidence, and can inspire a similar sentiment, more than half his work is successfully accomplished. But the great difficulty is yet to be explained. There belong to the delivery certain emphases, tones, cadences, pauses and warmth, which, when and where to use, constitute the great secret of Oratory. If Oratory do not come with earnestness of manner, with appropriate stress and stops, in a stream of harmony, sometimes rushing like a torrent, then gliding like a rill, with occasionally a tremulous articulation, entirely unaffected and always the result of strong emotion, depend upon it the Orator will fail; and whatever may be his other resources for affording pleasure and interest, he will never delight, astonish and confound by the transporting powers of Eloquence.

Oratory is the great moral agent that guides and controls all human passions. Eloquence is the universal instrument, by which all the wants of animated nature are supplied. It is to the moral what electricity is to the natural world; it is the great pervading, connecting and upholding principle of all sensual inclination and of all intellectual influence. It is the subtle, active, quickening impulse, restless as air and rapid as lightning, that runs through all sense, gives edge to its desires and effect to its designs—it assumes all shapes, tries all forms, and shines in all varieties—it sues in the cry of infancy, woos in the sigh of love, wails in the groan of pain, implores in the suffering of despair, supplicates in the wretchedness of sorrow, beseeches in the misery of want, persuades in truth, demands in justice, melts in pity, thunders in vengeance and rages in distraction. At one moment it fans like the zephyr, at another blasts like the si-

moon—Now plays and refreshes like the breeze, then storms and destroys like the blast. The mind is never steady under its operation—Reason dreads it, judgment shrinks from under its crushing energy, and neither, in their dominion, has the security of an hour under its ravaging march.

He who witnesses the calm serenity of a summer's morn, or the mellow stillness of an autumnal eve, forgets that they can ever be disturbed by any cause—Let but the angry lightnings of heaven gather in the west, growl for a time as they thicken in the cloud, rise in swelling murmurs as they come over the fearful silence of nature, then quicken in flashes, streak through the vaulted skies, peal from pole to pole, from heaven to earth, and rend the lofty forest, in vain may he look for those tranquil seasons that so regaled his senses before this "war of elements." So with Oratory—Reason and judgment sit secure amid its playful gambols—but let it once swell into a tempest,—drive upon the feelings,—strike at the sympathies,—beat upon the affections,—storm on the passions,—dash on the sensibilities of the heart,—and reason and judgment are gone,—fled from the sober helm of conscience: The mind surrenders at discretion—decisions are made and sent forth which no future composure can repair, that often become fate to an individual and destiny to a nation.