

THE
PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

ADAMS SHERMAN HILL

PRINCIPLES
OF
RHETORIC

A.S.HILL

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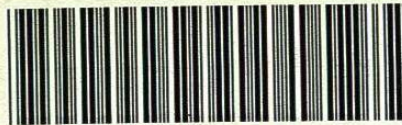
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THE PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC

BY

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IN HARVARD COLLEGE

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*Nam ipsum latine loqui, est illud quidem, ut paullo ante
dixi, in magna laude ponendum; sed non tam sua sponte,
quam quod est a plerisque neglectum: non enim tam praeclarum
est scire latine, quam turpe nescire; neque tam id mihi oratoris
boni, quam civis romani proprium videtur.*

CICERO: Brutus, xxxvii.

P R E F A C E.

FOR the purposes of this treatise, Rhetoric may be defined as the art of efficient communication by language. It is not one of several arts out of which a choice may be made; it is *the* art to the principles of which, consciously or unconsciously, a good writer or speaker must conform.

It is an *art*, not a science: for it neither observes, nor discovers, nor classifies; but it shows how to convey from one mind to another the results of observation, discovery, or classification; it uses knowledge, not as knowledge, but as power.

Logic simply teaches the right use of reason, and may be practised by the solitary inhabitant of a desert island; but Rhetoric, being the art of *communication* by language, implies the presence, in fact or in imagination, of at least two persons, — the speaker or the writer, and the person spoken to or written to. Aristotle makes the very essence of Rhetoric to lie in the distinct recognition of a hearer. Hence, its rules are not absolute, like those of logic, but relative to the character and circumstances of the person or persons addressed; for though

truth is one, and correct reasoning must always be correct, the ways of communicating truth are many.

Being the art of communication by *language*, Rhetoric applies to any subject-matter that can be treated in words, but has no subject-matter peculiar to itself. It does not undertake to furnish a person with something to say; but it does undertake to tell him how best to say that with which he has provided himself. "Style," says Coleridge, "is the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be;" but some meaning there must be: for, "in order to form a good style, the primary rule and condition is, not to attempt to express ourselves in language before we thoroughly know our own meaning."

Part I. of this treatise discusses and illustrates the general principles which apply to written or spoken discourse of every kind. Part II. deals with those principles which apply, exclusively or especially, to . . . [the several] kinds of prose writing which seem to require separate treatment.

1878.

While engaged in revising this book, I have seen no occasion to modify in any important respect what was said in the preface to the first edition. I still believe that the function of rhetoric is not to provide the student of composition with materials for thought, nor yet to lead him to cultivate style for style's sake, but to stimulate and train his powers of expression, — to enable him to say

what he has to say in appropriate language. I still believe that rhetoric should be studied at school and in college, not as a science, but as an art with practical ends in view.

By supplying deficiencies that time has disclosed making rough places smooth, and adapting the treatment of each topic to present needs, I have tried to make the book more serviceable to advanced students of English Composition. From Book I. of Part I. some elementary matters have been omitted, but so much material has been added that the total number of pages is increased; in Book II. of Part I. the old material has been re-arranged and new material has been introduced. In Part II. still greater changes have been made: Description and Narration, which were originally treated together, are now treated in separate chapters and with greater fulness; the chapters on Argument have been thrown into one and entirely rewritten; and a chapter on Exposition has been added.

For valuable assistance in the revision of this volume, I am indebted to Miss E. A. Withey and Miss A. F. Rowe. I have also to thank several of my colleagues for contributions of various kinds, and especially Professor L. B. R. Briggs and Professor G. L. Kittredge, through whose hands the proof-sheets have passed, and by whose learning, acumen, and unsparing criticism I have greatly profited.

1895.

A. S. H.

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THE PRINCIPLES OF RHETORIC.

PART I.—COMPOSITION IN GENERAL.

Book I.—GRAMMATICAL PURITY. *i*

CHAPTER I.

GOOD USE.

THE foundations of rhetoric rest upon grammar; for grammatical purity is a requisite of good writing.

Though it may be no merit to know the proper use of our native tongue, not to know it is a positive demerit,—a demerit the greater in those of us who have had the advantages of education.

To know is comparatively easy; but to have our knowledge always ready for use, to apply it in every sentence we frame, whether we have time to be careful or not, is far from easy. Not even eminent speakers or writers, not even those who readily detect in others errors in grammar, are themselves free from similar faults,—such faults at least as may be committed, through inadvertence, in the hurry of speech or of composition. “A distinguished British scholar of the last century said he had known but three of his countrymen who spoke their native language with uniform gram-