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THE
COLUMBIAN ORATOR:



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CONTAINING
A VARIETY OF
ORIGINAL AND SELECTED PIECES;

TOGETHER WITH
R U L E S;

CALCULATED

TO IMPROVE YOUTH AND OTHERS IN THE
ORNAMENTAL AND USEFUL

ART OF ELOQUENCE.

By CALEB BINGHAM, A. M.

Author of the American Preceptor, Young Lady's Accidence, &c.

"CATO cultivated ELOQUENCE, as a necessary mean for defending THE
RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, and for enforcing good Counsels."
ROLLIN.

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DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO WIT:

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the twentieth day of November, A. D. 1810, and in the thirty-fifth Year of the Independence of the United States of America, CALEB BINGHAM of the said District, has deposited in this Office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the words following, to wit: "The Columbian Orator: containing a variety of original and selected pieces; together with rules; calculated to improve youth and others in the ornamental and useful art of eloquence. By CALEB BINGHAM, A. M. author of the American Preceptor, Young Lady's Accidence, &c. "Cato cultivated eloquence, as a necessary mean for defending the rights of the people, and for enforcing good counsels." Rollin.

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such Copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also to an Act entitled, "An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned; and extending the benefits thereof to the Arts of Designing, Engraving and Etching Historical, and other prints."

WILLIAM S. SHAW, } Clerk of the District
 } of Massachusetts.

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P R E F A C E.

NOTWITHSTANDING the multiplicity of School-Books now in use, it has been often suggested, that a Selection, calculated particularly for Dialogue and Declamation, would be of extensive utility in our seminaries.

The art of Oratory needs no encomium. To cultivate its rudiments, and diffuse its spirit among the Youth of America, is the design of this Book.

Of the many pieces which this volume contains, three only are to be found in any publication of the kind. A large proportion is entirely original. To those, who have assisted him in this part, the author returns his warmest acknowledgments.

The COLUMBIAN ORATOR is designed for a Second Part to the AMERICAN PRECEPTOR; for this reason, no pieces are inserted from that book.

As no advantage could arise from a methodical arrangement, the Author has preferred variety to system. In his choice of materials, it has been his object to select such as should inspire the pupil with the ardour of eloquence, and the love of virtue. He has spared no pains to render the Work, in every respect, worthy of the generous patronage, which a liberal public have bestowed on his former publications.



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William Deane



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THE
COLUMBIAN ORATOR, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

GENERAL DIRECTIONS FOR SPEAKING; EXTRACTED
FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.

OF PRONUNCIATION IN GENERAL.

THE best judges among the ancients have represented Pronunciation, which they likewise called Action, as the principal part of an orator's province; from whence he is chiefly to expect success in the art of persuasion. When Cicero, in the person of Crassus, has largely and elegantly discoursed upon all the other parts of oratory, coming at last to speak of this, he says, "All the former have their effect as they are pronounced. It is the action alone which governs in speaking; without which the best orator is of no value; and is often defeated by one, in other respects, much his inferior." And he lets us know, that Demosthenes was of the same opinion; who, when he was asked what was the principal thing in oratory, replied, Action; and being asked again a second and a third time, what was next considerable, he still made the same answer.

And,

And, indeed, if he had not judged this highly necessary for an orator, he would scarcely have taken so much pains in correcting those natural defects, under which he laboured at first, in order to acquire it. For he had both a weak voice, and likewise an impediment in his speech, so that he could not pronounce distinctly some particular letters. The former of which defects he conquered, partly by speaking as loud as he could upon the shore, when the sea roared and was boisterous; and partly by pronouncing long periods as he walked up hill; both of which methods contributed to strengthen his voice. And he found means to render his pronunciation more clear and articulate, by the help of some little stones put under his tongue. Nor was he less careful in endeavouring to gain the habit of a becoming and decent gesture; for which purpose he used to pronounce his discourses alone before a large glass. And because he had an ill custom of drawing up his shoulders when he spoke, to amend that, he used to place them under a sword, which hung over him with the point downward.

Such pains did this prince of the Grecian orators take to remove those difficulties, which would have been sufficient to discourage an inferior, and less aspiring genius. And to how great a perfection he arrived in his action, under all these disadvantages, by his indefatigable diligence and application, is evident from the confession of his great adversary and rival in oratory, Eschines; who, when he could not bear the disgrace of being worsted by Demosthenes in the cause of Ctesiphon, retired to Rhodes. And being desired by the inhabitants, he recited to them his own oration upon that occasion; the next day they requested of him to let them hear that of Demosthenes; which, having pronounced in a most graceful manner, to the admiration of all who were present, "How much more (says he) would you have wondered, if you had heard him speak it himself!"

We might add to these authorities the judgment of Quintilian; who says, that "It is not of so much moment

ment what our compositions are, as how they are pronounced; since it is the manner of the delivery, by which the audience is moved."

"The truth of this sentiment of the ancients, concerning the power and efficacy of pronunciation, might be proved from many instances; but one or two may here suffice. Hortensius, a cotemporary with Cicero, and while living, next to him in reputation as an orator, was highly applauded for his action. But his orations after his death, as Quintilian tells us, did not appear answerable to his character; from whence he justly concludes, there must have been something pleasing when he spoke, by which he gained his character, which was lost in reading them.

But perhaps there is scarcely a more considerable instance of this than in Cicero himself. After the death of Pompey, when Cesar had gotten the government into his own hands, many of his acquaintance interceded with him in behalf of their relations and friends, who had been of the contrary party in the late wars. Among others, Cicero solicited for his friend Ligarius; which, Tubero understanding, who owed Ligarius a grudge, opposed; and undertook to represent him to Cesar as unworthy of his mercy. Cesar himself was prejudiced against Ligarius; and therefore, when the cause was come before him, he said, "We may venture to hear Cicero display his eloquence; for I know the person he pleads for to be an ill man, and my enemy."

But, however, in the course of his oration, Cicero so wrought upon his passions, that by the frequent alteration in his countenance, the emotions of his mind were very conspicuous. And when he came to touch upon the battle of Pharsalia, which had given Cesar the empire of the world, he represented it in such a moving and lively manner, that Cesar could no longer contain himself, but was thrown into such a fit of shivering, that he dropped the papers which he held in his hand. This was the more remarkable, because Cesar was himself

self one of the greatest orators of that age; knew all the arts of address, and avenues to the passions; and consequently was better prepared to guard against them.

But neither his skill, nor resolution of mind, was of sufficient force against the power of oratory; but the conqueror of the world became a conquest to the charms of Cicero's eloquence; so that, contrary to his intention, he pardoned Ligarius. Now that oration is still extant, and appears exceedingly well calculated to touch the soft and tender passions and springs of the soul; but we believe it can scarcely be discernible to any, in reading it, how it should have had so surprising an effect; which must therefore have been chiefly owing to the wonderful address of the speaker.

The more natural the pronunciation is, the more moving it will be; since the perfection of art consists in its nearest resemblance to nature. And therefore it is not without good reason, that the ancients make it one qualification of an orator, that he be a *good* man; because a person of this character will make the cause he espouses his own; and the more sensibly he is touched with it himself, the more natural will be his action; and, of course, the more easily will he affect others. Cicero says, "It is certain that truth (by which he means nature) in every thing excels imitation; but if that were sufficient of itself in action, we should have no occasion for art."

In his opinion therefore (and who was ever a better judge?) art, in this case, as well as in many others, if well managed, will assist and improve nature. But this is not all; for sometimes we find the force of it so great and powerful, that, where it is wholly counterfeit, it will for the time work the same effect as if it were founded in truth. This is well known to those who have been conversant with the representations of the theatre. In tragedies, though we are sensible that every thing we see and hear is counterfeit; yet such is the power of action, that we are oftentimes affected by it in the same manner as if it were all reality.

Anger

Anger and resentment at the appearance of cruelty, concern and solicitude for distressed virtue, rise in our breasts; and tears are extorted from us for oppressed innocence: though at the same time, perhaps, we are ready to laugh at ourselves for being thus decoyed. If art then has so great an influence upon us, when supported by fancy and imagination only, how powerful must be the effect of a just and lively representation of what we know to be true.

How agreeable it is, both to nature and reason, that a warmth of expression and vehemency of motion should rise in proportion to the importance of the subject, and concern of the speaker, will further appear by looking back a little into the more early and simple ages of the world. For the higher we go, the more we shall find of both. The Romans had a very great talent this way, and the Greeks a greater. The eastern nations excelled in it, and particularly the Hebrews.

Nothing can equal the strength and vivacity of the figures they employed in their discourse, and the very actions they used, to express their sentiments; such as putting ashes on their heads, tearing their garments, and covering themselves with sackcloth under any deep distress and sorrow of mind. And hence, no doubt, arose those surprising effects of eloquence, which we never experience now.

And what is said here, with respect to the action of the eastern nations, was in a good measure customary among the Greeks and Romans; if not entirely of the same kind, yet perhaps as vehement and expressive.

They did not think language of itself sufficient to express the height of their passions, unless enforced by uncommon motions and gestures. Thus, when Achilles had driven the Trojans into their city with the greatest precipitation and terror, and only Hector ventured to tarry without the gates to engage him, Homer represents both king Priam and his queen under the highest consternation for the danger of their son. And therefore, in order to prevail with him to come into the city

city and not fight with Achilles, they not only entreat him from the walls in the most tender and moving language imaginable; but they tear off their grey locks with their hands, and adjure him to comply with their request.

The poet knew very well, that no words of themselves could represent those agonies of mind he endeavoured to convey, unless heightened by the idea of such actions as were expressive of the deepest sorrow. In one of Cicero's orations, he does not stick to argue in this manner with his adversary. "Would you talk thus (says he) if you were serious? Would you, who are wont to display your eloquence so warmly in the danger of others, act so coldly in your own? Where is that concern, that ardour which used to extort pity even from children? Here is no emotion either of mind or body; neither the forehead struck, nor the thigh; nor so much as a stamp of the foot. Therefore, you have been so far from inflaming our minds, that you have scarcely kept us awake."

The ancients had persons, whose proper business it was to teach them how to regulate and manage their voice; and others, who instructed them in the whole art of pronunciation, both as to their voice and gestures. These latter were generally taken from the theatre, being some eminent experienced actors. But though they made use of actors to instruct their youth in forming their speech and gestures; yet the action of an orator was very different from that of the theatre.

Cicero very plainly represents this distinction, in the words of Crassus; when speaking of orators, he says, "The motions of the body ought to be suited to the expressions, not in a theatrical way, mimicking the words by particular gesticulations; but in a manner expressive of the general sense; with a sedate and manly inflection of the sides; not taken from the stage and actors, but from the exercise of arms and the palestra." And Quintilian says to the same purpose, "Every gesture and motion of the comedians is not to be imitated,

tated, nor to the same degree. They thought the action of the theatre too light and extravagant for the imitation of an orator; and therefore, though they employed actors to inform young persons in the first rudiments, yet they were afterwards sent to schools, designed on purpose to teach them a decent and graceful management of their bodies.

Being thus far prepared, they were afterwards sent to the schools of the rhetoricians. And here, as their business was to cultivate their style, and gain the whole art of eloquence, so particularly to acquire a just and accurate pronunciation by those exercises, in which for that end they were constantly employed. Nor, after all this pains and industry, did they yet think themselves sufficiently qualified to take upon them the character of orators. But it was their constant custom to get together some of their friends and acquaintance, who were proper judges of such performances, and declaim before them in private.

The business of these persons was to make observations both on their language and pronunciation. And they were allowed the greatest freedom to take notice of any thing thought to be amiss, either as to inaccuracy of method, impropriety of style, or indecency of their voice or actions. This gave them an opportunity to correct any such defects at first, before they became habitual. What effects might not justly be expected from such an institution? Persons trained up in this manner, with all those advantages, joined to a good natural genius, could not fail of making very complete orators. Though even after they came to appear in public, they did not lay aside the custom of declaiming.

The influence of sounds, either to raise or allay our passions, is evident from music. And certainly the harmony of a fine discourse, well and gracefully pronounced, is as capable of moving us, if not in a way so violent and ecstatic, yet not less powerful, and more agreeable to our rational faculties. As persons are differently affected when they speak, so they naturally