

BIRLA CENTRAL LIBRARY

PILANI (RAJASTHAN)

Call No.

808.5

M69L

Accession No.

5450

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

The Craft of Public Speaking

BY
ROSSLYN MITCHELL



GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
LONDON BOMBAY SYDNEY

First published 1933
by GEORGE G. HARRAP & CO. LTD.
39-41 Parker Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

Printed in Great Britain by Western Printing Services Ltd., Bristol

TO
C. R. M.
WITH LOVE

Such was the solicitude of Pericles when he had to speak in public that always he first addressed a prayer to the gods, that not a word might unawares escape him unsuitable to the occasion.

PLUTARCH

Writing winna do it; a letter canna look, and pray, and beg, and beseech, as the human voice can do to the human heart. A letter's like the music that ladies have for their spinets: nothing but black scores, compared to the same tune played or sung.

JEANIE DEANS, *The Heart of Midlothian*

Lord, let Glasgow flourish through the preaching of Thy Word and praising Thy Name.

Tron Kirk Bell, Glasgow

PREFACE

PUBLIC speaking is a craft. Oratory is an art. We cannot all be artists, but we may all be craftsmen.

The purpose of this book is to help people to become craftsmen by explaining to them some of the technique of the craft. It is not proposed to set down rules. There are no rules of public speaking. All that can be done is to give hints and guides which may make public speaking easy and pleasant, both for speakers and hearers, which is not quite the same thing.

This book does not attempt to make great speakers. If the quality of greatness is in the individual it will show itself in speech as in all other phases of life. If it is not, then no book will create it.

There are already many books on Oratory, and many more on Public Speaking. Some have been written by actors and teachers of elocution, and are excellent for those who want to recite. Some have been written by journalists who have had the opportunity of hearing many speakers. They are delightful to read and well worth study by those who are in the habit of speaking. But I

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

do not know a book written by one who has had a long personal experience of public speaking in all its forms. It is because I have had that experience that I have written this book. I hope it may help young men and women to become craftsmen in this valuable phase of the education of a British citizen.

E. R. M.

GLASGOW

September 1, 1933.

CONTENTS

PART I: THE INSTRUMENT

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. BE HEARD	11
II. THE SPEAKING VOICE	13
III. MAKING A VOICE	17
IV. ENUNCIATION	20
V. THE VOWELS	23
VI. ARTICULATION	26
VII. THE PHRASE	29

PART II: THE METHOD

VIII. THE SPEAKER	34
IX. THE LITTLE SPEECH	38
X. THE CHAIRMAN	44
XI. PREPARATION	54
XII. THE PERFECT WAY	58
XIII. DESIGN	61
XIV. THE PICTORIAL METHOD	64
XV. MASTERING THE THEME	67

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

PART III: THE ACHIEVEMENT

CHAPTER	PAGE
XVI. THE POLITICAL SPEECH	73
XVII. THE APPEAL	80
XVIII. NOTES ON THE POLITICAL SPEECH	85
XIX. THE LECTURE	90
XX. AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING	104
XXI. DEBATING	112
XXII. PULPIT AND PEW	118

PART IV: IN GENERAL

XXIII. GENERAL HINTS	126
XXIV. MAKING A VOCABULARY	145
XXV. AUDIENCES	153

PART I: THE INSTRUMENT

CHAPTER I

BE HEARD

IT is natural to speak. It is not natural to speak aloud. We all speak to our friends, but usually only in a conversational tone. Our ears have become accustomed to the sound of our voices speaking in a conversational tone. They are not accustomed to the sound of our voices speaking above the conversational tone. When we speak aloud our ears are conscious of a change. The brain is disturbed and we become nervous. It seems as if there is a lack of co-ordination. We must accustom our ears to the new tone.

The purpose of speaking in public is that the public may hear. The hearer is part of the performance. If he does not hear, then our speaking is in vain. No matter how wonderful our thought or how beautiful our language, if we are not heard they count for nothing.

If the hearer hears us only with difficulty his attention is directed so closely to the physical act of listening that he is not free to catch the significance of what we say. Public

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

speaking is not art for art's sake. It is a craft for a definite purpose. That purpose is to convey our thoughts to other people, to interest, please, persuade, convince, or arouse others.

Obviously, therefore, the first essential is to be heard easily. In order to be heard easily we must speak aloud. That does not mean that we must speak loudly. It means that we must increase the tone beyond that of conversation. We must also speak rather more distinctly and more slowly than we do in conversation. When we are talking to a few friends round the table the sound-waves have little distance to travel, and usually our heads are slightly lowered. But on a platform we are farther away. To be heard we require more tone, and sometimes, though not always, more volume. We require also a clearer definition of words and a clearer division of phrases. These things are necessary if we are to be heard. We must learn to speak aloud without speaking loudly. Loud speaking irritates the ear and the brain. We have to find something which adds power to the voice without adding noise. That something is tone, and tone proceeds from resonance.

CHAPTER II

THE SPEAKING VOICE

THE instrument for speaking is the voice. "I should love to speak, but I have no voice." How often people say that! It is nonsense. If you think you have no voice, stop thinking it. If you feel that you have no voice, make one. It is the simplest instrument to make and the simplest instrument to use. Later on you will find that it is also a most wonderful instrument for variety and effect.

When we talk among ourselves we seldom talk above a whisper. Speak a sentence in a conversational tone and you will notice certain things:

1. The sound comes from the back of the mouth, perhaps from the throat.
2. There is no music in the sound.
3. The mouth is hardly open.
4. We speak quickly.
5. There is little breath used.
6. The consonants are weak.
7. The vowels are short.
8. We use a small vocabulary and many familiar expressions.
9. The tone is unvaried.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

The difference between speaking in conversation and speaking aloud lies in those items. In speaking aloud:

1. The sound comes from the front of the mouth.
2. It has fullness.
3. We use our lips more and open our mouths.
4. We speak less quickly.
5. There is more breath used.
6. The consonants are clear.
7. The vowels are full.
8. We use a larger vocabulary and fewer familiar expressions.
9. We change the tone.

There is nothing terrifying about this. We do it every day. Whenever we become a little excited during conversation, if we are expressing views we hold strongly, if we are telling of an experience of beauty or adventure, we do all these things automatically. We cease to whisper, the throat opens, we move our lips more, there is sound in our speech, we emphasize consonants, we lengthen vowels, and words come gliding on to our lips which we seldom use in ordinary talk, and the voice moves up and down the scale.

Suppose two men have been for a holiday in Arran. They come home, one unmoved and the other deeply moved by the scenery.

THE SPEAKING VOICE

If you asked them what they thought of the place the one who was unmoved would say:

“Arn! Nuthin bt sea an 'san an hills an heather.”

There will be no music in the voice. The one who was moved will say:

“Arran! Nothing but sea / and sand / and hills / and heather!”

There will be a ring of exaltation in his voice. It will have a throb in it, with a slight nasal hum, and every word will have balance and meaning. He will speak more slowly, and instead of a monotonous sentence there will be variety..

Just that little touch of feeling causes the brain to produce speech of a different quality because the emotion is different. The brain changes the mechanism of speech to suit our emotions.

In speaking in public we must ask the brain to do for our speech what emotion causes it to do automatically. I do not mean that we are to do so consciously. Just at first we may think ourselves into doing it. But when we have grown more used to it we shall do it automatically without thinking of it at all. That time comes when the ear is accustomed to hearing the voice speak aloud.

All good speakers suffer from nerves.

Most of the nervousness of the beginner is due to the strangeness of hearing his own voice

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

in its new tone. The nervousness of the practised speaker is due to the fact that he has set the higher centres of the brain into activity by his thoughts, and the nerves respond. The beginner is worried by how he is to speak, the practised speaker by what he is about to say.

But we are beginners, so let us deliberately acquire these elements of the craft.

CHAPTER III

MAKING A VOICE

WHEN a lion is about to roar he lowers his head, opens his mouth, jerks the muscles of the diaphragm, throws all his breath against the back of his nose, and says, *N-ah!* That process gives resonance, and resonance is power. Speaking loudly is the product of force. The secret of speaking aloud is resonance or tone.

Very few people speak resonantly in ordinary talk. It is not necessary for ordinary purposes, and therefore not practised. But for speaking aloud it is essential.

Try a little experiment. Say *Ah*. You feel it in the throat. Now say it aloud and hold on to it. You find it quiver. The breath begins to give out, and the sound changes either in strength or in clearness.

Now place your hands on the diaphragm (just below the ribs), take a breath, and say *Ah* while you press the diaphragm. You will find the sound is thrown forward. The throat is easy and open, and the guttural quality of the vowel has gone. Now, without having your hands on the diaphragm, say *N-ah*, while you

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

smile. You will find the lower jaw will fall and the sound come from the front of the mouth. That is where it should come from. No voice will carry unless it is all produced in front of the ears.

Now say *N-ah*, resting for a moment on the *N*, so that there is a slight feeling of pressure behind the nose. You will find you have added new strength to the tone, though you are speaking no louder than before. You have found resonance. Do the same with the vowels *N-oo* and *N-o* and *N-ay* and *N-ee*. Let the vowel sound come very easily, very lightly at first, but increasing in tone—not in force.

If you are shy of making noises in the house, turn on a gramophone or the wireless and practise against the music. Let your ear grow used to hearing you speak like that. Then the brain will cease to be surprised.

The next step is to speak words with these sounds. Begin with *N-ah*, then take *Mah*, *Pah*, *Gah*. Go back to *Nah*, and take *Fah*, *Bah*, and *Lah*. Back again to *Nah*, and take *Dah*, *Kah*, and *Sah*.

Having done these exercises once or twice, you can perform them mentally without speaking at all. The process that is taking place is the use of muscles of body and jaw which are not usually at work, and the tuning in of the ear to the new sound of the voice and the fuller vowels.

MAKING A VOICE

Beware of these temptations:

1. Tightening the throat.
2. Raising the shoulders.
3. Breathing in through the mouth alone.

Let every part of you be at ease. All you are doing at this stage is to place the voice so that it may be resonant, and so have carrying power without being forced.

In ten minutes you will find that the voice is there which you thought was not there. It always was there, but you were afraid of it. Now that you have found it make friends with it. Use it. Do not strain. Do not speak loudly. Speak resonantly. Repetition is the secret of perfection. Think in terms of sound. Imagine yourself speaking. You will find that your voice is becoming happy, and it will become musical with happiness.

In a couple of days you will discover that it is easier, clearer, and more pleasant to speak like that, and it will become as natural to you as the former way.

You have made a voice, and made it your friend.

The next question is how to use it.

CHAPTER IV

ENUNCIATION

ENUNCIATION is the bugbear of elo-
cutionists. They make a fetish of it, and
often spoil a happy entertainment by mouth-
ing words, so that the beauty is lost in the
cosmetics. There is nothing wonderful about
enunciation. It is a natural process. It means
speaking words so that they may be heard.

If you say to yourself such a phrase as
"Now thank we all our God" you will not
bother much about the consonants and vowels.
You will think only of the meaning of the phrase,
and not at all of the words. But if you will
imagine yourself announcing a hymn of that title
to a congregation of three hundred people you
will quite spontaneously say it more slowly and
more distinctly. You will not say: "No han we
aw ah Ga." You know instinctively that the
three hundred people will not hear it. They
may hear *you*, but the phrase will be only a blur
of sound. Therefore, without conscious effort,
you emphasize the consonants and lengthen the
vowels. If you do that when you are imagining
yourself announcing a phrase which every one
knows you should do it more when speaking a

ENUNCIATION

phrase which nobody has heard before. You are very anxious that they should hear the phrase and understand its meaning. They are equally anxious. They do not know it. Only you can say it. Only by your speaking it can they ever know it. It is of the utmost importance that each shall hear it and understand it.

Enunciation is the art of speaking clearly. In public speaking the consonants, which would be only lightly touched in conversation, become an important part of the mechanism by which the thought is conveyed across the hall. The vowel which is slurred in conversation must become a distinct sound.

Enunciation is not the same as pronunciation. Enunciation is a question of distinctness, pronunciation is a question of correctness.

To the elocutionist correct pronunciation, that is, pronunciation according to accepted standards, is vital. It is as vital as correct grammar. The elocutionist sets out to display good English. The public speaker sets out to speak good sense. He may pronounce words in the manner of his place of upbringing. Indeed, it is an added attraction, because it emphasizes his personality. He may roll the 'r's' and blow the 'wh's,' or eliminate them. "Wot is the weason wy we don't gwow gwapes in Bwитай?" asks a Southerner of my acquaintance. A Scot would ask: "Whhat is the rreason whhy we don't grrrow grrapes in Brritain?"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

An Oxford man may look forward to the "idear of creating in Indiar a bettah, noblah, happiah Empah." A Glasgow man looks forward to the "ideah of creating in Indiah a betterr, noblerr, happierr Empirre." Mr Lloyd George says it is "ppaytent to all with knoledge." Mr Ramsay MacDonald says it is "pattent to all with know-ledge." Mr Baldwin talks to Lord Snowden about the Budget and Lord Snowden tells him about the Boodget.

Actors and elocutionists must adhere to the standard, if there is one, though they seldom do. The public speaker should be himself and speak in his own accent. He can leave pronunciation to take care of itself. But, because it is his first duty to be heard, he must enunciate clearly.

CHAPTER V

THE VOWELS

OUR language has many words which differ only in vowel sound. Unless the vowel is given its proper weight there is confusion. Think how many words consist of L and K and a vowel. The major vowels give us lake, leek or leak, like and Luke. But there are others—lack, lick, lock, luck, look. So with B and K. We have bake, beak bike, book, buck, back, bock. With P and L we have pale, peel, pile, pole, pool, and pall, pell, pill, poll, pull.

In conversation we manage these words by a slight change. From the platform they must have a distinctive sound. That sound must not be created deliberately, as is the way of elocutionists. They know beforehand every word they are going to say, and have probably recited the same words a hundred times. The speaker, as a rule, does not know beforehand what words his brain will provide for the expression of his thoughts. It is therefore more important for the speaker than for the elocutionist to make his brain and ear familiar with the vowel sound. It must be the sound which

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

the brain gives automatically. It must be the only, the inevitable, sound. We must therefore accustom our brain to lengthen slightly the vowel sounds. It is done best by *thinking* the sounds. Just look over the list of vowel sounds and without uttering them think them.

Long: ah, ay, ee, aw, oh, oo.

Using the Pitman mnemonic we have:

Pa may we all go too.

At first thought they rush forward. But if we think them as they are to carry to three hundred people in a hall they will slacken speed and lengthen themselves. If we distinguish them clearly in our minds they will distinguish themselves when we speak.

Short: a, e, i, o, u, oo.

That pen is not much good.

These vowels being shorter have less distinctiveness in themselves. It is necessary, therefore, to think into them a distinctiveness which they do not possess.

When we are sure that the brain recognizes the distinctiveness of each we can begin to speak them, at first very softly, but holding them for a second or two. We shall find that they tend to change in two ways. They develop a beat and they lose the sound. 'Pa' becomes *Pa'a'a* and *Pa a'eh*. To rid ourselves of the vibration and the loss of sound we must practise with voice and brain. Thinking has such a lot to do with it. Once the brain has grasped the

THE VOWELS

difference and acquired control of the sound we need never trouble again about vowels for speaking.

A helpful little exercise is to read a few lines of print, exaggerating the vowel sounds. It may be done in silence for the vowel sounds. But for voice control it is better to do it aloud while the gramophone or wireless is playing. But we must remember never to strain or push a vowel. It must be easy. Therefore just touch the consonants lightly and *think* the sound of the vowel, just as a violinist *thinks* the sound he is going to produce from his fiddle. He does not work his hand and fingers to create a sound which he hears. He thinks the sound first. In response to this brain direction his finger touches the string. So also in public speech thinking is the prelude to sound, and the sound will be the result of the thought.

“As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he,”
is good psychology and good elocution.

CHAPTER VI

ARTICULATION

VOWELS are the flesh of words. Consonants are the bones. They are as important as the vowels, for it is they which carry the vowels. And they carry them for a distance. They are the charge which fires the shell. The trouble about consonants comes not from those which begin a word, but from those which bridge the beginning and the end and those which are at the end. The cause of the trouble is mental indolence. Because we get along nicely in general speech without the middle and final consonants we forget that they are there.

We say, "The ca' sa' on the ma'," and because it is linked with the general conversation it serves to convey the important information that the 'cat sat on the mat.' It will not serve on the platform. We must give every consonant some weight, and for public speaking the middle and final are more important than the beginning. We cannot avoid using the beginning ones. We are apt to be slovenly with the others.

Therefore, in order to accustom the mind

ARTICULATION

to the presence of the middle and end consonants as essential parts of the word we must at first exaggerate them. Exaggeration in private makes for clarity in public.

Special attention must be given to the final consonant when the next word begins with the same consonant. It is not often that a speaker finds his brain supplying words like that. The elocutionist who speaks words that have been written has to face the difficulty more often. The mind of the speaker is more sensitive to sound and rhythm than that of the writer, and will of its own accord avoid what it knows to be difficulties. It is one of the beauties of speech that the mind may provide the words it wants to use. The mind of the elocutionist is prisoner to the words of the author.

The best way to acquire the sense of the weight of consonants is to take a paragraph and read it very slowly, emphasizing each consonant to get the feel of it. It may be done in silence, but if so it should be done deliberately, as if one were reading to a deaf person who understands lip-reading. Of course, no one does that in public, but in practice we have to do deliberately and emphatically what in public we are to do naturally.

Where two consonants come together, as in such words as 'acts' and 'facts,' 'health' and 'wealth,' 'mast' and 'caste,' nothing but practice with concentration will enable the speaker

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

to change the formation of the mouth quickly enough in public. We find very soon that when speaking these words there is an unconscious slowing down of the pace.

Having by practice accustomed the mouth to say and the ear to hear the vowels and consonants, forget all about them. They must be automatic. When speaking in public one has no time to think of the enunciation of words. There are far more important things to think about. And, after all, articulation is a mechanical operation and should be achieved without conscious effort.

CHAPTER VII

THE PHRASE

HITHERTO we have been thinking of words as units. The next stage is to weave those word-units into phrases. We do not speak words as units. We speak in phrases. In conversation we do not speak a set of words. We have an idea, and the words come automatically until the idea is expressed. In public speaking there is at first a temptation to speak in words, to seek emphasis by pressing on one word, to shove it out of the phrase, to shout it or to pause immediately before it or after it in the hope of creating an effect.

The mind of the hearer is affected not by a word but by an idea expressed in a phrase. Over-emphasis of a word may destroy the phrase and take from the clearness of the idea.

This is the great distinction between platform speakers and ministers. Ministers, with few exceptions, speak words, and, still more, they read words. They do not speak or read phrases. Therefore they lose rhythm, and rhythm in speech, as in music, is life. To pause between words which are part of a phrase may emphasize

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

the second word, but it destroys the phrase and distorts the idea which the phrase should express. Besides, it takes beauty from speech, and results in a sense of strain.

Consider this passage:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

In print it is full of punctuation. But punctuation marks are dead things, and these are living words.

Read from a pulpit the passage might sound:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth / come ye to the / waters / and he that hath no money / come ye / buy and / eat / yea come / buy wine and / milk / without money and / without price.”

Spoken by a platform speaker who uses the ministerial style of emphasis, particularly where one word ends in a consonant and the next begins with a consonant, it would sound:

“Ho, every one that-*er* thirsteth / Come ye to the waters / and he that hath no-*er* money / come ye, buy and-*er* eat. Yea, come, buy wine and-*er* milk / without-*er* money and-*er* without-*er* price.”

In speech a pause is an idiom; so also is the sound *er* or a shrug of the shoulders. And

THE PHRASE

every pause ought to have a meaning as part of the phrase.

If you were really thinking this passage and if the saying of it was the spontaneous expression of your thought you would say:

“Ho, every one that thirsteth / come ye to the waters / and he that hath no money / come ye, buy and eat / yea come, buy wine and milk / without money and without price.”

You would make five pauses instead of eleven, because you would be speaking six phrases.

The secret of successful speech lies in this effortless expression of ideas, whereby the words are subordinated to the idea. Emphasis obtained by putting pressure on words is not emphasis of the idea. On the contrary, it results in the idea being stifled by the prominence of the words.

If we refer again to the passage quoted we find that the importance lies not in the word ‘money’ or the word ‘price,’ but in the phrase, “without money and without price.” If, therefore, the words ‘money’ and ‘price’ are forced forward the significance of the ‘without’ is lost, and the impression created is not that which is intended.

~~There is music in words, but a more living music in phrases.~~

It is in order to clarify the idea by leaving it free from the weight of words that we use short sentences. Take care of the short

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

sentences, and the long ones will take care of themselves. It is more difficult to express an idea in a short sentence than in a long one. But it is better for the hearer to have it expressed in three short sentences than in one long one. People who are listening are less able to follow the meaning of a long sentence than those who are reading. An involved sentence in a book may present no difficulty. If it does the reader may go back and read it again. In speech a long sentence taxes the mind of the hearer. Once it is spoken it is gone for ever.

The first duty of a speaker is to see that his hearers hear easily and understand easily. It is one of the dangers of written speeches and sermons that they have the style of reading and not of hearing. They may be delightful to the eye, but they are disturbing to the ear.

In reading aloud for practice watch the phrasing, because the attention which is given to phrasing in reading becomes an automatic influence in speaking. Think always in phrases.

There may be times when words and phrases are the colour-makers of a thought, when we paint with a big brush for an impressionistic effect, for what is called tone-colour. But tone-colour is created not by emphasis on words, but by the choice of words.

If you have developed the voice, have learnt the weight of vowels and consonants and

THE PHRASE

absorbed the sense and sound of phrasing, you are ready for the public.

“But,” you may ask, “what am I to say?”

You would not be on your feet unless you had something to say. Well, say it.

PART II: THE METHOD

CHAPTER VIII

THE SPEAKER

THERE are three human elements in a public speech. First, the speaker who has something to say. Second, each individual in the audience who has come, anxious to hear what the speaker has to say. Third, the unity created by a number of individuals being gathered together for the same purpose. That means three personalities.

If the speaker had not something to say he would not be or ought not to be speaking. If any one of the individuals did not want to hear what the speaker had to say he would not be there. Because each one wants to hear what the speaker has to say there is a contact which merges them into a unity.

Mr Smith is to speak. Mr Brown and Mr Jones, quite different in tradition, outlook, and status, are anxious to hear Mr Smith speak. Because they both have this thought they create a new person, namely, Mr Brown-Jones. To a public speaker this person with the hyphenated name is very important.

Has it occurred to you that Mr Brown and Mr Jones are making it easy for you to speak

THE SPEAKER

by wanting to hear you? That is why they are there. They want to hear you as individuals, and they hope they will experience the Brown-Jones emotion. That means they come as willing hearers, willing also to surrender some of their individuality in order to enjoy the emotion of being a corporate unity. Thereby they become an audience.

The psychology of persuasion consists of the play of the speaker on each one of his audience and the creation of the mass mind among them.

You are to speak. It is you the individuals want to hear. It is you the audience wants to hear. They want you to speak well, but above all they want You. They will help. The French say they 'assist' at a meeting. So do the British. But be sure of this, it is You they want. Not you imitating some one else; not you attempting to be different from what you are; not you thinking out clever things in your parlour, but You now, here, just as you are, the real You. In other words, you as a Person, that is, your Personality. They might prefer to hear Mr Winston Churchill, but as Mr Winston Churchill is not available they want to hear You, and prefer to hear You rather than you giving an imitation of Mr Winston Churchill.

They as units, and the personality they create by being together of one mind, are waiting to respond to your Personality. They invite reciprocity. They want to feel the action of

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

your mind. Some of them want the feeling of thrill by hearing you say well that with which they already agree. Others want to know about the subject and want to hear about it through you. They are capable of being moved into agreeing with you. Others are not likely to be moved by the substance of your speech, but want to study your manner of expressing it. They are your friends. They will forgive squeaking voices, they will overlook bad grammar, they will forget stammering, anything, if only you will give them yourself.

Here is the proof. Many great speakers have had weaknesses in voice production. Wilberforce had a shrill, thin voice. Edmund Burke wailed. Abraham Lincoln, when roused, squeaked. Some of our modern princes of eloquence lisp or hesitate or sometimes roar. They are known as great speakers. They give themselves as they are, and the audience yields to them. It is much better not to squeak or shriek or hesitate or roar. But these defects are as nothing compared with the defect of pretentiousness. I have heard men in the House of Commons, the most critical assembly in the world, speak with much accent and little grammar, and hold the House by the power of their sincerity. And I have known others deliver a first-rate speech in the manner of some one else and 'flop.'

Most men who begin to speak in public

THE SPEAKER

have in their minds some one whose speaking they have admired. At first they speak with that some one in their mind and try to speak like him. They may gain something by doing so, but if they lose their own individuality they lose their most potent asset as speakers.

Many men were fascinated by the pure, rich oratory of the late Lord Rosebery. When they spoke they wanted to make the audience feel that they too were Roseberys. But, because they were not Rosebery, they could not be Roseberys. They were imitation Roseberys. Later on the wise ones knew that they were more potent and more at ease as real John Smiths than as imitation Roseberys.

Beginners often say: "Oh, if only I could speak like a Baldwin or an Asquith." They can't, because they have not the minds and circumstances, the experience and the temperament of a Baldwin or an Asquith. But they have minds and circumstances; they have experience and temperament. Let them be themselves, and thereby create new standards. They may find a warmer glow than Baldwin's. They may find a more lucid directness than Asquith's. Or they may not. They may find the colour and dash of Lloyd George. Still better, they may find something unique, as unique as they are themselves.

A speaker is most dominant when he is most himself, for speaking is self-expression.

CHAPTER IX

THE LITTLE SPEECH

NOW for your little speech. You are to speak it in your own way. It is to be your thought, not some one else's. It is to have some quality which is of you yourself.

And it is to have other qualities. It is to be intelligible and intelligent. It is to have grace and charm, for it is just a little courtesy speech. You are to propose a vote of thanks to one who has already spoken.

Be sincere and don't swank. Your speech is an unimportant item of the programme. But for the moment, while you are on your feet, you are master of the audience. Therefore be master of yourself and of your subject.

Think how it is done by the slovenly and artificial speakers. The slovenly speaker rises with his hands in his pockets, where he has pennies and keys to rattle, and says: "Missa Jairma, ladies an' genlm." That is the worst of all introductions to an audience.

Stand up with a movement of the head towards the chairman who has called on you. Stand up as if you were pleased that the distinction has been given to you. Put your

THE LITTLE SPEECH

hands anywhere you like except in your pockets. Put them behind your back, put them at your waist, clasp them in front, let them hang down, touch the table with one and let the other hang down, clutch your lapels, finger your watch-chain, do anything with them, except stick them in your pockets.

Then say: "Mr Chairman," with a slight look towards him, "Ladies, and Gentlemen." Is it not a beautiful phrase, this: "Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen"? How musically the French and German broadcast announcers speak their salutations and good-nights! Yet their phrases are not so rhythmical as our "Ladies and Gentlemen." It is a perfect curve of sound with a beautiful 'l' to begin and a humming 'n' to end. Let it sound as if it were a salutation, so that the chairman will automatically smile to be so addressed and the audience will feel pleased to be so graciously greeted. Then, while they have been looking upon you, you have made a friendly contact at the first move.

Now comes your introduction. The pretentious say: "A very pleasant and important duty has been imposed upon me." Fiddlesticks! Every one knows that you are going to propose a vote of thanks, a simple act of courtesy. Don't try to make them think you are labouring under a sense of responsibility. The man who begins like that will probably go on to say: "I could

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

have wished that the duty had been entrusted to some one more able to do justice to it than I am." If you talk rubbish like that, the audience will have the same wish.

Cut away all that sort of stuff for ever. It is not you. It is the relic of some idiotic primer of platform etiquette that your grandfather read. You never talk in that inferior and pedantic way among your friends. Why be pompous now? The audience is your friend. They want you to say how much you have enjoyed yourself, so that they may clap their hands to show how much they have enjoyed themselves. They are rather glad it is you who are to say it, and not the minister or a local councillor.

If you came out of a fine meeting with two friends what would you say? You would say: "What a splendid time we have had," or "It has been a real treat," or "I wouldn't have missed it for worlds." A dozen phrases would come to your brain. Well, say one of them to your audience.

If you feel that it is an honour to be asked to propose the vote of thanks say so.

"Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen, what a splendid time we have had this evening!" or "Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen, I am very proud to be asked to express to Mr Blank our appreciation of the splendid lecture to which we have listened this evening," or "Mr Chairman, I am glad that you have

THE LITTLE SPEECH

invited me to thank Mr Blank on behalf of our society for the great treat he has given us this evening," or "Mr Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen, you would not like to go away without telling the speaker and singers how much we have enjoyed ourselves this evening." Later on you will create other phrases of more distinction, but in the beginning use the phrases that are natural to you.

Do not exaggerate and do not qualify overmuch. Tell the truth with discretion. You may say, if it is true, that the lecture has been the finest of the series. But it would be better to say: "This is the fifth lecture of our series. The Syllabus seems to have been prepared by a musician, for it has been a crescendo of enjoyment."

Over-qualification destroys the grace of the gratitude.

"I think you will all agree with me when I say that this has been one of the best meetings we have had for some time." That is just nothing. "One of the best." "For some time." Away with it!

Your little speech should be conversation raised to a slightly higher level. Treat the audience as your friends. Be natural with them, a little bit glowing, and all will be well with you.

So with the substance of your speech. Refer, if you like, to the speech in general or

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

to some part of it which particularly interested you. But do not try to repeat the speech or embellish it. Avoid the silly manner of saying: "Mr Blank said so-and-so; I entirely agree with him." It does not add to the authority of Mr Blank's remarks that you agree with them. It only makes you appear rather superior. Pay him the compliment of believing that he is good at his job. Call his descriptions vivid or charming, say that his address has been deeply interesting or anything else that you feel about it, but do not try to add to it or express approval, as if you were an important personage.

At the end the simpler the words the more gracious the effect. "And so we thank you very much," will bring a round of applause. "We are most grateful and hope you will come back to us very soon," will give the speaker an opening for a reply.

This seems all very simple. So it is. It is simple to do, so long as you are natural. It is simple in tone because it is you who are giving thanks. Naturalness and courtesy are the hallmark of perfection for this kind of speech.

While we are dealing with votes of thanks we may note one of the most difficult. It is the omnibus vote of thanks after a social meeting, a concert, or a soirée. The usual method is to take a programme in the hand and go over the names, introducing each one with: "Then we had Miss Jones, whose singing delighted us

THE LITTLE SPEECH

so much. Then we had Mr Brown, and I am sure we all enjoyed his beautiful playing. And we must not forget Miss Robinson, who accompanied the singers. Last of all I refer to Mr Blank, whose address I am sure will long remain in our memories." All this rigmarole is distressing to the visitors and wearisome to the audience.

It is far better not to mention them by name, because it means grinding out trite phrases about each one. Refer not to the artists, but to their art. Say a few words about songs or singing, about the beautiful tone of the violin or the appealing beauty of the 'cello—Praise their art, and the artists will be happy to know that they are associated with your appreciation of their art.

Then, after a word or two about the speech, refer to the accompanist, who is usually forgotten, and thank them all for the pleasure which the audience has enjoyed.

Remember that the evening is over by the time you begin. It is the music that should remain. Do not destroy the impression created by the music by muttering a lot of toothless generalities.

Let it be done with a glow, warm and generous, and finish in a flame of appreciation.

CHAPTER X

THE CHAIRMAN

WE are not yet at the stage of making speeches to convince. Before we reach that stage we shall probably be asked to preside at a meeting, and this may involve a short speech, or a series of interpolations between items. Let us consider how we are to deal with

- (a) A Guild meeting at which we introduce a lecturer.
- (b) A public meeting at which we introduce a speaker.
- (c) A social evening at which we have speakers and musicians and chairman's remarks.
- (d) A meeting of a society at which we are to move the adoption of the report and call on others to do similar little duties.

(a) *A Guild Meeting.* You are introducing a speaker to a Guild meeting. He is going to speak on a trip to Egypt.

Your business is to introduce the speaker. It is not your business to speak about Egypt. If you have been to Egypt, forget about it.

THE CHAIRMAN

You must leave the speaker to bring Egypt fresh to the audience. Audiences like their goods first-hand. It is only courteous to allow the speaker to give his goods fresh and new. It is his ideas on Egypt that the audience wants to hear, not yours.

All lecturers dread the chairman's introduction. So much have they suffered, and audiences with them, that many lecture societies have abolished the chairman. But in a Guild, where the atmosphere is intimate, the chairman has a splendid opportunity of linking the lecturer and the Guild.

Tell the visitor something about the Guild and tell the Guild something about the visitor. Tell them nothing about Egypt.

If the Guild meets regularly, beware of being off-hand and casual. It is new to the visitor, and it is right that he should be treated as an honoured guest. If you are president, you may say: "Good evening, friends," then devoting yourself to the speaker. If you are not president, begin with "Ladies and Gentlemen," and then direct your thoughts to the visitor.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, this meeting is held under the auspices of the Western Co-operative Guild. We meet here every week. Usually we have to provide our entertainment ourselves. But occasionally we have a special night, when some one comes to speak to us of some special phase of life. This is one of our special nights.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

We have been looking forward to this evening, because we felt we were very fortunate in persuading Mr Blank to come to speak to us. Mr Blank is a great traveller. We should all like to travel. Unfortunately it is too expensive for most of us. But I am sure that with so good a companion we shall all feel as if we were travelling this evening into Egypt. Mr Blank, we welcome you to our Guild, and are all waiting for you to take us to the land of mystery which you know so well."

Mr Blank, who knows his job, will at once mention his gracious welcome and say something about the Guild. The result is an atmosphere of friendship. We are no longer units. We are already made one in respect of being of the Guild, being friends of the lecturer and being interested in Egypt.

You have made for Mr Blank an audience-mind, which is the greatest service you can render to a speaker.

When Mr Blank has finished, you may quite appropriately refer to your own visit. Say only a few sentences as to how vividly he has brought to your mind the recollection of your own experiences. More than that is not expected and would not be appreciated.

The chairman should allow the lecturer to remain supreme. It is his occasion. Let him keep all the cream.

(b) *A Public Meeting.* The chairman is to

THE CHAIRMAN

introduce a speaker, not a lecturer. He is a man of definite ideas upon the subject of which he is to speak. It is probably controversial. He is going to speak with the object not of pleasing and entertaining the audience, but of convincing them.

The chairman has been chosen to preside because, in general, his views are the views which the speaker is to express.

Go to a dozen meetings of this nature and twelve times you will find the chairman usurp the position of the speaker. If it is a meeting held under the auspices of a political party, there are probably four subjects of importance. Our stupid chairman will speak briefly on all four. The result is that the speaker, instead of dealing with items fresh to the audience, is left with nothing to do but expand what the chairman has already said. This is fatal to the success of the meeting. A political audience is like an audience at a cinema. They enjoy what is going on, but at the back of their minds there is always a pleasurable anticipation as to what is coming next. If the chairman has already outlined the main subjects of interest that anticipation is destroyed. Moreover, the effect upon the speaker is injurious. He will feel that he is repeating. The zest with which he came to the meeting evaporates. He is tempted, because of the lack of novelty in his subject, to embellish his speech, to play to emotion, to exaggerate. He must get his effects. If he is denied the privilege of

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

getting them by the novelty of the subject he must get them by treatment. The chairman who steals a speaker's subject steals his audience, and defeats the main purpose of the meeting, which is to create the mass-mind susceptible to persuasion. No speaker can persuade an audience to accept second-hand goods.

There are two other weaknesses to which political chairmen are very prone. The first is to assume that all who have come to the meeting are of his colour and so try to work up their enthusiasm. It is an error in fact and judgment. It may be that 90 per cent. are of the same colour. Leave them to the speaker. His ultimate success will be enhanced if he begins his work on an audience that is placid. But there are the others, the 10 per cent. who are neutral or opposed. It is not your business to convert them. That is the business of the speaker. The greatest achievement of a speech is to make a convert from an opponent or an adherent from a neutral. In a political meeting the important people are not those on the platform or the party folk in the audience, but the 10 per cent. who have wandered in because they are interested in the subject or in the speaker, or had nothing else to do on that evening.

The second weakness is akin to the first. It is the tendency on the part of the chairman to arouse feelings of indignation or hate against the other party. The long speech which is to

THE CHAIRMAN

follow must be affirmative and constructive. It is sheer agony for a speaker who is going to propound affirmative propositions to be left in an atmosphere of negative emotions. He will have to spend a large part of his time in destroying the negative atmosphere the chairman has created before he can get anything affirmative across the footlights.

The chairman's duty is to introduce the speaker, not to make a speech. It is his duty also to enhance the reputation and power of the speaker. All that he says must increase the stature of the speaker. Casual, personal, humorous remarks about the speaker are injurious. You may know him intimately, but to an audience he is a Personality. Let him be dominant. If he does not receive respect from the chairman, how is he to be expected to receive it from the audience?

Therefore speak of the party or the cause, what it stands for, not what it stands against. Speak of the speaker, his services to the cause, his place in the city or nation, and leave him to deal with controversial matters.

Chairmen, like children, should be seen and little heard.

(c) *A Social Evening*. In this case we are presiding at a gathering of friends. We want the atmosphere to be intimate, friendly, and informal. Much of the success of the evening will depend on the chairman. It is he who sets the

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

tone of the meeting. According to his conduct of the show will be the conduct of artists, speakers, and audience. If he is spontaneous and intimate the artists will come in smiling and play with ease and happiness as if they were playing for enjoyment only. The speaker will be light in his approach, and his mind will be open to suggestions of humour and wit. The audience will lose its inhibitions and be in the mood of readiness to chuckle and appreciate.

If, however, the chairman is stiff, formal, awkward, or serious, everything and every one will be affected. The artists will be performers, bowing stiffly and playing accurately, but without glow. The speaker will be heavy and serious. His mind will not be so alert and his method will be more elaborate than entertaining. Even though he may be a wit, he will hesitate to break in on the tone of earnestness that has been set by the chairman. And the audience will be inert and polite but conventionally respectable, rather afraid to laugh. As a result the speech which might have been the memorable incident may be a failure. Please remember that a practised speaker is by far the most entertaining artist on the programme. Singers and players and readers have few surprises for the audience. They are detached. But the speaker can be intimate and topical, can introduce asides that refer to matters personally known to all, and lead them to laugh at themselves.

THE CHAIRMAN

The chairman, therefore, should be quietly gay. He should rise, when the proceedings are to begin, sprucely and with assurance, with a sort of "Here we are again" air. Then, right off, a word of welcome: this is the twenty-fifth annual social; he sees some, like Tom Browne, who was then a mettlesome colt, showing signs of benevolent maturity; the society has developed wonderfully in that quarter of a century: he says quarter of a century because it sounds more majestic than twenty-five years; much that we were founded to attain has been achieved, but new problems have arisen and new objects become attainable. Much of our success has been due to the splendid work of our guest Mr MacPherson. He has been like a father to us, generally generous but sometimes showing authority when we were naughty boys. We have several friends who have come with their gifts of music to entertain us. (In a social evening artists, even if engaged professionally, are always referred to as friends, as if they were members of the society.)

That is not all. It is the privilege of the chairman to refer to artists and songs in an amusing or appreciative way. He must always remember that speaking of any kind is for immediate effect upon the audience. In such an intimate atmosphere as a social meeting a chairman may take liberties. He may say after a song: "That was really beautiful." To read it in print may give

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

the impression of cheapness. It is atmospheric, and commentary of this nature brings buoyancy and speed to the meeting. Besides, it leads the audience to exchange chatter between the items and prepares them for the speaker himself. It is an astrigent to him and keeps him from being pompous. In Scots phrase, "We're a' Jock Tamson's bairns" on such an occasion.

At the close we shall probably finish by singing "Auld Lang Syne." Here the chairman may strike a note of encouragement. He refers to the success of the meeting, announces "Auld Lang Syne," and "As we clasp hands may it be a renewal of friendship and a rededication to the cause for which this association was founded. To those who worked in its beginning our greetings—or our grateful memory; to those who bear the burden of carrying it on our thanks and loyalty; to members and their families happiness and prosperity; to all the hand of friendship. Auld Lang Syne."

This is all part of the technique of showmanship which, as we say, makes the evening go with a bang.

(d) *The Adoption of a Report.* The annual meeting of a Society is a formal occasion. The Report has been circulated. The chairman is rather important, because he personifies the Society. He will express pleasure to see how many have come to the meeting. It shows that interest in the work of the Society is being

THE CHAIRMAN

maintained. And the Society merits that interest. Something about the year's work, first, as shown in the printed Report, and second, as he knows it in its human expression. He will speak in appreciation of the officers of the Society, and move the adoption of the Report.

As he calls upon others to take part he may refer to them as "an old and valued friend of the Society," or as "one who has given devoted service to the Society," or as "one who is associated with so many aspects of public life." Each person introduced should be given a phrase of welcome and appreciation.

It is well to avoid, in moving the adoption of a Report, a detailed reference to what is already in print. It is more interesting to the audience to hear of one or two items which have particularly caught the attention of the speaker. His speech will be a success if, in addition to facts, he gives opinions. He may therefore take one fact or figure in the Report as a peg upon which to hang a speech in which he gives his opinion of the Society, its function and its value. If he can link with it an item of personal experience so much the better.

We have taken part in small work, making courtesy speeches and acting as chairman.

We now face the problem of making an original speech.

CHAPTER XI

PREPARATION

IF you were going to give a recitation in public you would spend months in learning elocution, enunciation, emphasis, gesture, and a lot of other things. Then you would recite something which somebody else wrote.

If you were going to sing in public you would spend months in learning voice production, tone, rhythm, phrasing, and a lot of other things. Then you would sing somebody else's words to somebody else's music, with a piano accompaniment to carry you through.

You are going to speak words that are your own choice to express your own thoughts. You have to be your own author and musician. When you recite, or sing, it is to please. When you speak, it is to please and persuade. Surely such a venture is worth some preparation and a little study.

You would prepare differently for different types of recitation and song. So also do we prepare differently for different types of speech.

We assume that you have practised, so that the voice speaking aloud is no longer strange. You have made clear enunciation automatic, so

PREPARATION

that you speak clearly without conscious effort. You have felt the beauty of phrasing, so that the brain phrases of its own accord. You have made a few short speeches, proposing a vote of thanks, introducing a speaker or saying a few words in appreciation. Now you are asked to make a speech which has something more of yourself in it. It may be a formal occasion or it may be a public meeting. It may be a debate, an address, a lecture, a political speech, or an after-dinner toast.

If you will read ~~that~~ paragraph over again you will feel at once ~~that~~ each suggestion conjures up in your mind a special atmosphere. The mind is an excellent guide. "Formal occasion; public meeting; debate; address; lecture; political speech; after-dinner toast." At once the mind suggests atmosphere, different in each of these cases.

In preparation it is necessary to create in the mind the atmosphere appropriate to the occasion, to visualize the setting.

There are several methods which may be adopted. Some speakers write out their speeches and read them. That is not speaking. It is reading. If you do that you remain detached from the audience. An audience likes to see the thought developing. It likes to feel that it is developing. It likes to feel that it has some part in the development. W. E. Gladstone said: "The orator's work, from its very inception, is

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

inextricably mixed up with practice. It is cast in the mould offered to him by the mind of his hearers. It is an influence principally received from his audience in a vapour which he pours back upon them in a flood." If you read, the audience knows that the development is not taking place now, but is already complete. They are not part of the performance, but apart from it.

Of course, if you cannot be articulate in any other way, then read your speech. But if you are going to read it, write it out as if you were speaking at the moment to an audience. That means that you are thinking of the voice and the ear, and not of the pen and the eye. It must be the technique of speaking, not of writing.

The reason why so many people fall asleep in church is that the minister does not speak the living thoughts of Sunday, but reads the dead thoughts of Friday. The 'literary sermon' is a contradiction in terms. But it is possible, and many ministers have the gift, to write and read a sermon in the speaking manner.

Other people write out speeches and learn them by heart. An expert like Mr Winston Churchill can do that, and deliver his speech as if it were spontaneous. In the hands of one who is not an expert such a method produces a feeling of artificiality, and artificiality is a fatal defect. ~ speech ~

Others write out their speeches and then

PREPARATION

make notes to remind them of what they have written.

The danger of this method is that the mind is more concerned with remembering what was written than with the ideas that are to be expressed. One of the joys of speaking is to feel the mind supplying the words and phrases to express the thought. In the warmth of a meeting the mind will provide more appropriate words than can be thought out in the frigid loneliness of the study.

This is the almost perfect way. It is essential to prepare your thought. To make a speech without thought is to insult an audience. If the thought is complete it will galvanize the mind into clothing it in words and phrases. And because the mind is most vital at the moment of speaking it will choose words from a wider range and of more exact appropriateness than at other times. Moreover, there is a feeling of spontaneity in the speaker whose mind is giving him words which adds to his effectiveness as well as to his pleasure.

If any of these methods is adopted the greatest care must be taken not to overload the speech either in ideas or in words. The more simple a speech is in thought and expression the more potent it is. To be simple-minded is not to be a simpleton.

CHAPTER XII

THE PERFECT WAY

BUT what, after all, is a speech. It is a theme expressed in phrases made up of words. It has substance and form. We all have words; some have a wider vocabulary than others. In another part of this book we shall see how the vocabulary may be increased. But at the moment we must be content with the words we have. For any but the most abstruse thoughts the brain supplies the words automatically. Give the brain a theme with which it is familiar and it will express the theme in its own way. If we know the theme thoroughly it becomes part of us. It will not slip away if we have made it part of us. We shall not have to rely on memory, which may deceive us. We speak what we know so well that it is part of ourselves. That is what the audience wants, to have the theme come to them as directly from us as in the case of a friend speaking to a friend.

Hence, sincerity is the first essential in preparation. First, sincerity in that we will not say anything we do not believe. Second, sincerity in expression, in that we will not say what we do believe in an artificial or pretentious manner.

THE PERFECT WAY

If we think out the theme in a logical sequence, the mind will carry it from phase to phase of its own accord and leave the brain to supply the words for its expression. There is a difference between the function of the mind and that of the brain. The mind conceives thought, the brain is its mechanical instrument. It is the mind which thinks and feels, laughs, glows, flames, or blisters. The brain in response to these activities conjures up words, phrases, illustrations, historical instances, metaphors, and all the figures of speech of which we shall speak later.

If you will be at pains to follow this process in preparation, the result will be inevitable.

First, master your subject, then master yourself, and you will readily master your audience.

Consider your theme in its simplest form. Speak it either mentally or aloud. You have now laid the foundation. You know the theme. Speak it again, and your mind, released from its first duty, will be free to give it a more elaborate form. You will notice that the words are different. New ideas will come. You will remember some incident or illustration appropriate to it because it has sprung from it. The theme itself will expand. You will find yourself saying: "By Jove, I never thought of that."

Let it simmer. Think it over again, that is to say, imagine yourself saying it. You will

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

find that the theme is now automatic and the brain is busy with the form.

Then the day before you are to speak outline the theme and treatment in headings on post-cards. The theme is the skeleton. The words are the flesh with which it is to be clothed. Let it be not too fleshy. Discard whatever is unnecessary. You will find that the style of expression varies according to your thought of the audience you are to address. You have already caught some of the vapour, though you have not yet seen your audience.

With this preparation your speech will be a good speech. With a little more thought you can enhance its effect by correlating substance and form.

Substance and form must be in harmony with the occasion.

CHAPTER XIII

DESIGN

OBVIOUSLY a formal occasion warrants a speech in which form is the essential. It is a speech for pleasure. Its purpose is not to persuade or convince but to please. It is not argumentative, but complimentary.

If we are welcoming a stranger we do not enter into a dissertation. We welcome him in cordial words and warm phrases. It is form, design, and language that are important.

In a speech to convince or persuade the balance is towards substance, though here too form is of great importance. Recently I went to a meeting addressed by two men and a woman in the very forefront of public life. The matter of their speeches was perfect. The manner of presentation was execrable. Not more than 400 out of the 2000 people present could hear them. They clipped their vowels, dropped their voices, mumbled the end of their sentences, had not one gleam of humour and not a glint of fire. The result was boredom. But a young man with a small speech to make spoke clearly, crisply, and graphically. Every one heard with ease. He had not much to say, but he said it

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

as if the success of the meeting depended on it. And he was the success of the evening.

The formal speech is lyrical, and in the lyric form is vital.

As in a poem, so in a speech, the form will in some measure shape itself according to the substance. The theme suggests the rhythm. The words will automatically adjust themselves.

Take as an example two descriptive poems, Gray's *Elegy* and *The Deserted Village*. In the *Elegy* every consonant, vowel, word, accent, is chosen to heighten the tonal effect. The purpose is not merely to describe but to create feeling. In *The Deserted Village* words are not important in themselves. They are subservient to the purpose of the description, which is the creation of the idea of contrast.

Read aloud slowly two extracts:

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild;
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.

You cannot help feeling the sense of form in the *Elegy*. In *The Deserted Village* it is the substance that arrests you. So in a speech. A

DESIGN

speech on "Wordsworth" will differ in form and words and atmosphere from an oration on "Liberty" as a prayer differs from a sermon.

We do well to allow the substance, which is our Thought, to find its own form, which is our Expression. But, having found the form, we may be able to enhance its quality by careful preparation.

You may be saying that such an elaborate process makes speaking a torment instead of a pleasure. On the contrary. We have been talking to you about your first speech. When you have followed this process half a dozen times you will do it automatically. You will not labour at it. You will find yourself preparing for it in the train or when walking. And you will notice another peculiar thing. With the theme in your mind you will find in your general reading most extraordinary bits that just fit in to your idea of the speech, little incidents in history, quotations and even new thoughts. The world makes way for the man who knows what he wants, and the Press and libraries seem to be waiting to help the man who is thinking about the speech he is going to make.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PICTORIAL METHOD

EVERY speaker has his own method of securing the sequence of his theme. I have tried many, but for those who are beginning I advise the pictorial method.

A speech consists of a beginning, a middle, and an ending. The beginning is the point of contact. The middle sets down the proposition, argues about it, illustrates it, develops it into relationship with something greater than itself. The ending is the good-bye fanfare.

That is how a flower grows: seed, root, shoot, stem, leaf, and bloom. That is how a river flows: spring, stream, tributary, river, ocean. That is how a road leads: setting out, countryside, glen, uphill, round the bend to the vista from the hill-top. That is how a fire is kindled: paper, little sticks, bigger sticks, small coal, nuts, and the glowing lump. In each case there is progression from diffidence to grandeur without disturbance of the element. The quality changes, the essential remains the same. So is the way of a speech. It should be a unity, changing in appearance and in form, but of the same elements throughout. It is an

THE PICTORIAL METHOD

easy and ever-moving progression from diffidence to grandeur. If, therefore, in preparation we have in view a flower, a tree, a river, or a road we shall have the feeling of progression, and the theme will shape itself to conform to our feeling. A speech should be not a series of steps but a gradual ascent. It should have movement but not jerks.

It is so much worth while to prepare. The audience is coming to hear you. It is giving you a dominant position. You are the active member. The audience is voluntarily passive. While you are speaking, you alone are of importance. For good or ill the power is yours. And history tells us that there is no more potent means of moving the minds of men than speech. Give therefore of your best. The audience is quick to note how you approach it. If you start with a great flourish, you may be accounted vain. Diffidence will be accounted modesty. But never apologize. The audience has given you your position. Accept it. To apologize to an audience is as much as to tell them they have chosen badly in coming. An audience will protect you and defend you, as a woman does a husband, lest others may think she has made a bad choice.

But you must know whither and where you are going. You must know not only your direction but your destination. Therefore preparation must be complete.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

There are two noted speakers who speak with partial preparation. One of them will speak for twenty minutes with a voice like a violoncello. Every word drops into its line like the type of a linotype machine. Every sentence is compact and ends with strength. Every thought is poised and balanced. Then, if he exhausts his preparation, he will go on for another half-hour roaring like a foghorn, rambling from subject to subject, weaving phrases of dreary platitudes, gesticulating and perspiring, tearing every passion to tatters, until, some time after the audience is exhausted, he becomes exhausted himself. The other is the same. So long as he speaks what he has thought out he is logical, cool, and crisp. Then off he goes along the road he has not prepared, shouts and stamps, becomes liquid with sentimentality, fills up time with quotations from the metrical psalms and paraphrases or the poems of Robert Burns. These two men are like the old roads in Western Canada. They begin wide, well paved, and straight, and end in a squirrel track running up a tree.

If you have prepared for twenty minutes, speak for twenty minutes. Your theme is finished. Let it end. If you do not, you will have to start another theme to which you have given no thought, and the result will be a muddle and a failure.

CHAPTER XV

MASTERING THE THEME

TO obtain substance it is necessary to think and read. It may be that you have already read much or thought much on the subject. In that case it is worth while thinking what you are going to select.

Those who know most are most liable to be discursive, and thereby create an effect of woolliness.

Let us assume that you are to speak at the opening of a local Art Show or Engineering Exhibition. However much you may know about art or engineering, it is undesirable that you use the occasion as an exhibition of your knowledge. Let your knowledge be the background from which you speak, and let your speech be about the development of art, or the influence of art, or the value of craftsmanship.

If you do not know about these things, and you are to speak because of your public position, there is something you must do and something you must avoid. You must avoid saying that you know nothing about the subject. The late Lord Birkenhead, who seldom failed when he had to speak, went on one occasion as the guest

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

of a company of musicians. He began by saying that he knew nothing about music, that it had never interested him, and proceeded to say that he hardly knew one note of music from another. The effect was to offer an unpardonable slight to his hosts, to whom, because they were musicians, music was one of the most important subjects in life.

It is not funny to be rude, and ignorance is not a condition of which to boast.

If, therefore, you know little of the subject, go to some one who does, and tell him frankly what you have to do, and ask him how he would deal with it. In the course of your conversation he will tell you some things of a general nature. But a few of his ideas will be in accord with your general outlook on life. Write them down, and ask him to check their technical accuracy. Ask him to lend you a book or tell you the appropriate headings of the encyclopedia. Then read. You will be adding to your store of knowledge, and will be able to lay hold of one or two ideas which will be enough to carry you through. Let the rest go. Do not try to remember them. If they do not grip you, they are not likely to grip your hearers. It may be that when you are on your feet some of them will return to your memory. But let your theme be definite, and let the atmosphere of familiarity with the subject be created by the two ideas you have mastered.

You may by using this method speak

MASTERING THE THEME

acceptably, though not with authority, upon any subject, the Arts, horticulture, philately, missionary work, cabbages, and kings. If you are a public man you may have to speak on a dozen different subjects in a month. No one expects you to know all about each of them. But you are expected to know something about each of them. Let what you do affect to know be absolutely accurate, and expressed in terms familiar to those whose knowledge is full, and you will be accounted a good speaker. Probably you will be accounted more than that, for the public if convinced that you are accurate in 10 per cent. of life will assume that you are accurate in the other 90 per cent.

But let us go a stage further. You are going to make a speech on a subject of which you are supposed to have knowledge, or of which every one is supposed to have knowledge.

The first thing is to know precisely what is your subject. You must define your terms.

If you are to speak on the Church, Modern Youth, Tory Democracy, Socialism, Free Trade, Temperance, Cromwell, Robert Burns, or King Charles's Head, you must be certain what you mean by these terms. Let me beseech you not to speak on what other people mean by these terms. It is what you mean that matters. It is your thought that is your contribution. It is your idea that the audience wants.

Our outlook on life, our tradition and experi-

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

ence, affect not only our interpretation of facts but facts themselves. Because you are you, some facts will appear important which to me appear only incidental, and *vice versa*. What is wanted from you is the facts that seem important to you, and the effect they have on your interpretation of the subject.

I know of no better way to master a theme than by asking oneself questions about it. Let us take any one of the subjects we have mentioned; or, rather, as the quality is different in some, let us take two: one "the Church," the other "Cromwell." We are to speak on the question: "Is the Church a failure?" Here are the questions: What do I mean by the Church? Is it the Church universal or Churches? Is it Christianity or Christendom? Is it the spirit of Christianity or is it the organization known as the Church? If it is the Church, which Church? Am I thinking of the Church of England, which is Episcopalian, the Church of Scotland, which is Presbyterian, the Roman Catholic Church, which is Hierarchical, the Methodist, Congregational, Baptist, or what? If you are wise, you will decide to speak with your mind set on the one you know best. But you must decide on something. Then speak from that point of view. Discard the rest and firmly resolve that nothing shall make you side-step from it.

So you must decide what you mean by Modern Youth or Socialism or Free Trade.

MASTERING THE THEME

When you come to deal with a subject which refers to an individual, the first question is: "What do I know of him, the circumstances in which he lived, the contribution he made?" Then comes the vital question: "What does he mean to me?" What he means to you is the most important element, but its value depends on what you know of the man, his times, and his work. Therefore read about him and talk about him. You may decide that Cromwell was a saint and a hero or a hypocrite and a tyrant. You may decide that he was a democrat fighting for democracy or an autocrat fighting for power. You may decide that he was the fruit of his circumstances or the root of his own greatness. Whatever you decide, let it be clear in your mind.

Then ask yourself: "Why do I think so?" You must find your reasons, because the reasons that lead you to think so are the main substance of the speech you are to make. Then comes the third question: "What authority is there for my opinion?" Look it up and make a note of it. Your speech is to be made up of your own opinion, not the opinions of Thomas Carlyle or Hilaire Belloc, but you will clarify, change, or reinforce your own views by studying theirs.

The kind of speech you make will be determined by your preparation. It will be in condemnation or in justification. The language will be different. The sentiment you excite within

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

yourself will be different. The emotions you excite in your audience will be different.

Whatever may be the subject, you will find that it is easier to make a speech in condemnation than one in justification. Destruction excites a greater fluency than construction. But the result of the speech on the audience is, in the one case, to leave them with the sense of having lost something, and, in the other case, to leave them with the feeling of having built up something within themselves.

If you are to make speaking part of your equipment for a public career, you may be wisely advised to be on your guard on occasions when your speeches are destructive. You should never end on the destructive note. You should present the alternative, the constructive side, at the finish. The world may admire a destroyer, but it pins its faith to a saviour, for the movement of the human mind is forward and upward.

Now let us turn our attention to longer speeches and consider them in their special features.

PART III: THE ACHIEVEMENT

CHAPTER XVI

THE POLITICAL SPEECH

THE object of a political speech is to interest the audience, to explain a policy, to prove its worth, to convince the audience of its rightness and feasibility, to win them to help in its realization, and to lead them.

It is the supreme test of speech. It has been the most potent instrument in human life. Its power is tested by its success on the audience. It is an affair of the moment. Only those who hear it are judges of its worth. No one who reads it afterwards, not having heard it, is a good judge of it. It is an affair of speaker and audience and speech. Nothing else matters.

The speaker is to lead. He must therefore feel himself a leader, or, if nervousness makes impossible that feeling, he must think himself a leader. If once he imagines himself inferior to his audience, he is lost. Therefore, you who are beginning, pay no attention to the platform where your leaders are. Think only of the audience whose leader you are to be. Make yourself sure of yourself. The audience, which wants to

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

believe in you, and wants to feel that you are leading it, will share your faith in yourself and make you its guide.

Because you are to be dominant, you should look confident. We cannot look like leaders if we slouch with our hands in our pockets. We cannot look like leaders if we stand like wax figures advertising ready-made clothing. To be leaders we must be alive. Therefore we stand up erect, but not stiff, to give to the eye of the beholder the appearance of poise, control, and sureness.

Because we are to lead the people, we must know them and like them. Therefore, if we are visiting a strange town we shall find out something of the people, their traditions, their outlook, so that we approach them with a certain familiarity, watchful not to arouse their prejudices, and ready to colour our speech with expressions readily recognized.

For example, speaking in Glasgow one might depict grandeur by saying, "as rugged as the rocks of Craig Royston," or depict simplicity by saying, "as modest as the wild flowers that grow on the shores of Loch Katrine." But that would not do for Ayr. We should say, "as rugged as the peaks of Arran," or "as modest as the wild flowers that grow on the banks of the Doon."

An audience is as quick to appreciate a local allusion that comes without effort as it is to resent an artificial allusion to curry favour.

In greater measure must we be careful of the

THE POLITICAL SPEECH

religious views of the people, and know their pursuits. The appeal to a city audience is of little effect on an agricultural community. Therefore we must know something of the people and the place. And we must like them well enough to enjoy their approval and appreciate their perverseness.

We begin by expressing pleasure that we have been invited to speak in this town or this hall. It was here that somebody did his great work or made his memorable speech, and it is a distinction to be associated with so distinguished an event or memory.

Then we acknowledge the presence of the chairman: "You, sir, have said . . ." That leads naturally to, "But what contribution has the other party to make," etc. *Courtesy*

In quiet, simple language we have a bit of descriptive talk. It is as if we were saying what everybody knows. We credit the audience with knowledge of it. *Descriptive*

Then, admitting the sincerity of the other party, we ask if that contribution can result in the object desired. Before we declare our own view that it cannot, we refer to a similar set of circumstances in which it was tried. By doing so we are leading the audience to decide that the other party is wrong, before we declare our own view. We know that we shall have their approval when we state that there can be no sound hope of benefit from that source. *Criticism*
Analogy

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

Applause This will bring applause—a moment to think of the next phase of the theme.

descriptive Now comes our chance. If we definitely say that our scheme will have the desired result, we are didactic and dogmatic. Therefore we say: "But it is natural to ask what is the proposal of our party." The audience will be interested to hear your description of that proposal. Has a similar proposal been tried before? Tell them when and with what result. "You will remember that in the days of . . ." or "In the crisis following the Napoleonic wars." Give them credit for knowing what you are referring to, but describe it as if nobody knew of it, which is probably nearer the truth. "The result then was . . ." "It could not be otherwise, because . . ."

Analogy

Argument

Growth Then comes a surprise, for you go on to say that the result did not end there. The adoption of this principle at that time led to a new outlook on other problems, so that there was an enlargement of national life, an enhancement of the quality of life of the people and of the standing of the nation among the peoples of the world.

May we not hope therefore ✓.

Now you face the criticisms of the other party, a few of whose followers are in the audience, whom you must win. Therefore you say: "But our opponents have three objections to our proposal." State them clearly and with

challenge

THE POLITICAL SPEECH

good humour, and answer them one by one.

When you have answered one of the criticisms, but not before, you can throw a touch of ridicule into it, so that the audience will laugh at the idea of having ever been influenced by so absurd a criticism. After another has been answered you may bring a touch of scorn, in the manner of asking if these people believe that the people have the mentality of the Dark Ages. After the last criticism has been answered, the turn must be affirmative. "No, sir, against such criticism our proposal stands unshaken. . . ."

But you must not finish there. There is in the mass-mind an adherence to ethical standards. The speaker's prestige is to be made not by intellectual argument only. He wants more than rational adherence to his arguments. He must have two more responses. First, his audience must be led to have faith in his proposals as morally right and in accord with their sentiment. Second, they must be led to see that faith personified in the speaker. Cato defined an orator as a good man skilled in speaking. That is precisely what the audience wants to think of the speaker. They will be impelled to action more by acknowledgment of his strength of character than by the strength of his arguments. Deep down, the people are more concerned about the righteousness of a movement than about its feasibility. There-

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

fore it must be to a righteous aim that the speaker leads them. And he must be a fit leader for a righteous cause. Here he touches the universal things of life, and in his peroration persuades his hearers that, through his principles and his party, they may reach the cosmic stature. This is an appeal to the individual under the guise of an appeal to the mass. It has the effect of making the individual opponent or neutral feel at ease mentally and morally among these people, most of whom he knows to be of your persuasion. It shakes also his association with the other party, and opens the way for him to change over.

He will not readily change, but he is more likely to do so if he is conscious that it is *right* to do so than if he thinks only that it may be profitable to do so.

Peroration

A speech does not come to an end. It has an ending, as a play has a final curtain. To end a speech with a mumble or a platitude is inartistic. It leaves the speech incomplete when it should be a whole. It leaves the audience bedraggled when it should be exhilarated. Let it end with a peroration, but do not perorate.

The peroration may be in any form consistent with the temperament of the meeting. It may be a short sentence or a long paragraph. But it must be done superlatively well. Because it contains the words that will be the last heard, it is likely to be remembered. If it is simple,

THE POLITICAL SPEECH

it must be simplicity itself. If it is challenging, it must be bold and strong. If it is noble, it must be majestic. It should be sustained and held to the last syllable.

A peroration should be more than memorized. It should be learned by heart and brain. The preceding sentences should be carefully planned to lead up to it, so that it emerges naturally. You cannot suitably introduce a peroration by saying: "I have finished," or by a pause which has the appearance of, "Now for the peroration." It will be most effective if it is in contrast with what has preceded it, yet part of an irresistible movement towards the climax. It should be not only the speaker's 'Good-bye' but his 'curtain.'

The peroration colours the memory of the audience. If it leads to laughter, the recollection of the speech will be a recollection of laughter. If it is wistful, the recollection of the speech will be tender. If it is strong, the recollection of the speech will be exhilarating.

As to an actor, so to a speaker, the entrance and exit are of vital importance; the exit more important than the entrance, for one may recover from a weak entrance, but from a weak exit there is no recovery.

CHAPTER XVII

THE APPEAL

THERE are three methods of approach to an audience. They are intellect, sentiment, and emotion.

Intellect is argumentative. It seeks to convince by facts and logical reasoning. The immediate effect is to arouse intellectual opposition. People may enjoy being moved, but they do not enjoy being convinced.

Sentiment is the stored-up traditions and ethical standards of the race. It is used to persuade the audience that the propositions of the speaker are in line with the inherent ideas of the hearers. It is an appeal to an ideal shared by all.

Emotion is the stirring of the feelings at the moment by an immediate and concrete incident.

In some speeches intellect may be employed alone. The aim is to persuade as to the advisability of a certain course of action. Questions of economics, *e.g.*, Free Trade and Tariff Reform, may be discussed in a completely detached manner, though they seldom are. Subjects dealing with history or theology may be purely narrative and argumentative. The speech is calm, deliberate, and frigid. There is no feeling aroused and

THE APPEAL

no colour created. It is an argument before a judge, not a jury. It refers to no basic standards of conduct or thought, to no general principles. It leaves the steady plodding of facts, arguments, and conclusions only to recall historical analogies. It is as if the speaker were saying: "That which has happened in the past may happen in similar circumstances in the future; indeed, is likely so to happen. Therefore be advised or warned by the past. But be more definitely persuaded by facts and deductions from facts." Very few men employ this critical method. In our time the most eminent exponents have been Lord Oxford, Mr J. M. Robertson, Sir John Simon, Viscount Snowden, and Sir Herbert Samuel.

Whenever a speaker refers to a principle which he assumes to be accepted he touches sentiment. To prove that forced labour in Kenya exists, that it is economically unsound and may lead to disturbance, is a process of the brain. Directly the theme is supported by a reference to liberty or slavery there is an appeal to sentiment, the positive sentiment of belief in and love of liberty, and the negative sentiment of antagonism to and abhorrence of slavery.

The two methods are almost inseparable. I remember in the 1906 General Election hearing a perfect example of their use. The speaker was dealing with the introduction of Chinese labourers into the Transvaal. He set

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

forth the facts—the number of men, the terms of the contract, the economic advantages of cheap labour, and the economic disadvantages of contract labour. There was hardly a movement in the audience. There was little change of tone in his voice. But twice he swept the audience. Having concluded his examination of the numbers of Chinese, he stopped, and, in a low voice, said very deliberately: “Among tribes of black Kaffirs we introduce 6000 Chinese men—and no Chinese women.” Then he raised his eyebrows and shrugged his shoulders. Instantly all his economic arguments were enforced by the sentiment of rightness and purity in the minds of the people, and a great roar of indignation rose from the hall. He then proceeded to deal with the terms of the contract, and, having dealt with them in detail, he said:

These are the terms by which these Chinese labourers are imported and on which they labour. They are called the terms of slavery. (*Hear, hear.*) Slavery is a harsh word. (*Hear, hear.*) I do not call it slavery, but you dare not call it freedom.

A burst of cheering answered the challenge.

All references to patriotism, courage, honour, kindness, love, and hatred are references to sentiment. In our time the greatest exponents of this form of speech, uniting intellect and sentiment, have been Lord Rosebery, Mr Stanley Baldwin, and Mr Winston Churchill.

THE APPEAL

Emotional appeal is of a different quality. It is transitory. It is immediate. It is used to excite pity or indignation at an incident. If, for example, the speaker I have referred to had described these Chinese being recruited, torn from their wives and families, herded on a ship, and transported across the seas to a strange and barren land, the effect would have been to create a feeling of sympathy with them. Minds would have reverted to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and Arab slave traders in Africa. Sorrow for the individual is emotion. Indignation against a system is sentiment. Mr Lloyd George is the unchallenged master in this form of appeal.

Preachers are much given to emotional appeal. They picture the old mother waiting for her wayward son, they excite tears for the erring father seeking his lost daughter. They describe a youth battling with the Niagara river of sin and at last being swept over the Falls. It is effective at the moment. It is not an abiding effect. It leaves the audience rather ashamed of itself. Sentiment, on the other hand, makes an audience grow in stature. The mind says: "You are of the blood. The history of the ages lives in you."

The perfect speech is that which combines the solidity of intellectual argument with the ~~appeal to the basic sentiments of the people.~~

It is worth while noting that the positive

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

sentiments are more potent than the negative. An audience grows in stature and in admiration of the speaker if he leads them to decide to support something because it is right. It is not so affected by being persuaded to condemn something because it is wrong. Love is stronger than hate.

Do not let this chapter frighten you. Argument, sentiment, and emotion are like the stops of a grand-organ. At first the player has to think which he will use, look for its position on the console, and deliberately pull it out or push it in. But when he has played the organ a few times he knows his instrument and feels, as the music proceeds, that a certain stop in a certain place is needed, and without conscious thought or effort he puts his hand forward and draws the stop.

Know yourself. Know your instrument. Know the stops, and your thought will lead you to choose the stop of argument, sentiment, emotion, or humour. You will respond automatically to the thought of your mind.

✓

CHAPTER XVIII

NOTES ON THE POLITICAL
SPEECH

BECAUSE the political platform is the stage for all manner of rhetorical acting, it is well to consider here one or two 'Do's' and 'Don'ts' of public speech.

1. Do speak to the whole audience, not to a part. If you feel disposed to turn to the right or left, add tone to your voice so that all may hear.

2. Do let the audience hear your 'asides.' It irritates them to see you mumble to the platform and see the important ones laugh at something which they have not heard. It creates the feeling that you and the platform are superior beings, and may even lead the audience to think you are scoring off them.

3. Do let your voice change colour by varying the tone. If you want to express scorn let it be as drab as dirt. If you want to express indignation let it glow like fire. If you want to express exaltation let it be golden. If you want to express horror or mystery lower the pitch but keep the resonance.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

4. Do control your arms and legs. A little movement is restful to the eye of the listener, but excessive gesticulation has two effects: it disturbs the listener and leads him to think you are trying to work him up. He likes to feel himself working up, but dislikes to feel he is being worked up. It is your voice and words that tell, not your gymnastics. Especially avoid clapping your hands or striking the table, because these noises make it difficult to hear what you are saying, so that, instead of emphasizing a point, they stifle it.

5. Do vary your style. Be pithy, staccato, or rotund, but not all the time. You may introduce little intermittent perorations to give the audience a chance to applaud, and so get oxygen into their lungs and stiffness out of their muscles, but do not make a speech of perorations. The audience will call it 'yattering.'

6. Do keep your temper. However strongly you may hate what you condemn, do not get hot-tempered about it. A woman in a bad temper at home is a figure of pathos, but a man in a bad temper on a platform is a figure of ridicule. Besides, foolish words are spoken in bad temper, and an audience is insulted by foolish words.

7. Do use your own expressions, and not spill out catch-phrases and clichés.

8. Do not exploit the weakness of a crowd, for that destroys your power. A political speech is not a public entertainment.

NOTES ON THE POLITICAL SPEECH

9. Do not feel hurt if an audience applauds little. The greatest applause is silence. And NEVER play for applause.

10. Do not persist in a style if you notice that it offends. The speaker must bow to the mood of his audience and change his method, if necessary.

11. Do not be afraid to show the audience that you are enthusiastic in the cause which you are advocating. The man who cannot put fire in a political speech should put his speech in the fire.

12. Do let the audience see the argument develop. A writer is like a sculptor who shows only the statue completed. The speaker is like a stone mason who chisels it out in view of the public.

13. Be clear, for clarity is the politeness of orators. Be real, for sincerity is the master-key to the heart. Be natural, for naturalness is the only channel for your personality. Be simple, for simplicity excludes none from understanding. Be accurate—exaggeration is as false as a lie. Be courageous where you are sure and a coward when uncertain.

14. Let your peroration be firmly set in your mind. When you have spoken it, sit down. A bedraggled peroration, like a bedraggled skirt, leaves a trail of mud.

15. Learn to love short words. In Lincoln's Gettysburg Speech, one of the immortal speeches

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

of history, there were 267 words, of which 200 were of one syllable, 43 of two syllables, and only 24 of more than two syllables.

There are occasions and subjects which demand the use of long Latinized words. If the brain is stored with words, the impulse of the idea will call them into service. But there is a fascination about the sound of one's voice rolling out oratorical periods, and one is tempted to use long words for effect. They seem to make 'beautiful' language and are apt to drive out the short words.

If you have a Latinized vocabulary you may sometimes find it inappropriate.

A vocabulary predominantly Anglo-Saxon is never inappropriate.

When Abraham Lincoln composed his first Inaugural he showed the draft to his Secretary of State, William Seward, a man famous for eloquence and administrative capacity. Seward thought that a final paragraph was necessary, and added these words:

I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens, enemies, but fellow-countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. The mystic chords of memory which, proceeding from so many battlefields, and so many patriotic graves, pass through all the hearts and all the hearths in this broad continent of ours will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation.

NOTES ON THE POLITICAL SPEECH

Lincoln read the paragraph and rewrote it:

I am loath to close. We are not enemies but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the union when again touched, as they surely will be, by the better angels of our nature.

16. Be interesting. If you cannot keep the interest of your audience, what you say matters little. But if you can lead people to listen, then what you say may be of vital importance to them—and to you.

CHAPTER XIX
THE LECTURE

WE consider the craft of lecturing in two sections:

1. The lecture of a professor to (*a*) a class of students and (*b*) the public.

2. The popular lecture, in the progress of difficulty—(*a*) autobiographical, (*b*) travel, (*c*) historical, (*d*) scientific, (*e*) literary, (*f*) philosophic.

1. *The Professor.* The first duty of a professor is to be heard. It is a duty that many professors fail to fulfil. It seems strange that these practitioners of dreary droning and inaudible mumbling should derive their title from "a teacher of rhetoric" and their gown from the robe of the rhetorician.

(*a*) Students in colleges when they go into the examination hall are expected to know their subject so well that without any notes they can write down what they have learned. Yet many of the professors of those subjects, with years of study and unlimited leisure, are so uncertain of themselves or their subject that they cannot talk about it. They have to sit and read word for word the concentrated wisdom of their age,

THE LECTURE

which is often considerable. And many of them can't read. It is one of the testimonies to the love of learning of the Scots that there are still young people willing to suffer the agony of lectures by the inarticulate and inaudible, though erudite, occupants of university chairs.

As a victim in rebellion and as a lecturer who has been merciful to his students, I appeal to professors to learn how to speak. They have, as an audience, youth eager to be caught by the living word. Why send them away feeling that they have wasted another precious hour of their lives? If written lectures preclude slovenliness in expression they should be so spoken that there is no slovenliness in enunciation. Is it not worth while for those who lecture to students to remember that all they have to impart, save the personal and intimate opinion, is already written in the text-book; that the personal and intimate opinion is best expressed in spontaneous and intimate speech, with the face and eyes of the lecturer visible to the students? For myself, I have found the most effective method to be the announcement beforehand of the pages of the text-book to be considered upon the occasion, and then, having studied it myself, comment upon it and expand it by analogy and illustration. To read a text-book in manuscript is not lecturing, because it misses the essential oneness of lecturer and audience that comes from personal address. Moreover, however valuable

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

the lecture may be, it is a waste of time and energy to have fifty students scribbling it down.

(b) It is often found that the same lecturer who reads inaudibly to his students will speak to an audience of non-students without using notes, and hold the attention of every member present. The lecture may not be quite so scholarly in form nor contain so much concentrated detail, but it is observable that those who hear it feel drawn to it in a way that is not experienced by students. Indeed, some students of my acquaintance have carried away more knowledge and felt a keener interest in the subject as a result of hearing their own professor give a public lecture than by attending the classes.

When a man has mastered a subject free delivery quickens his faculties, so that novel forms of expression leap to his tongue and bring not only words but vitality to his message.

2. *Popular Lectures.* A popular lecture is a form of entertainment. It is not primarily a process of instruction. Where there is an element of instruction, the members of the audience who enjoy that element most are those who are already in some degree familiar with the subject.

(a) Autobiographical lectures are possible only to famous persons. Not being a famous person, I have no experience of delivering lectures of this type, but I have heard them. They are most pleasing when the individual is sub-

THE LECTURE

ordinate to the event. Where the personal element is essential or desirable a qualification of the bare "I did" or "we went" is valuable. "I remember on one occasion I went with a small group" is not so convincing as "on one occasion a small group of us went."

The strength of autobiographical lectures lies in the opportunity given to the public of seeing the famous person. He is not expected to be an orator. If he has sailed to the Antarctic or flown to India or written a best-seller, it is as explorer, flier, or author that the public wish to see him. But as he is to lecture it is necessary to be heard. On one occasion in a lecture society in Glasgow the author of a famous book came to lecture. He received a fee of fifty guineas. He spoke almost inaudibly for ten minutes, read, quite inaudibly, passages from the book for thirty minutes, and sat down. I will not say that the audience was indignant. They had seen him, and that was an experience. But they did not hear him, and consequently were 'bored stiff.'

It is hardly fair to do that sort of thing. A man can easily make himself audible. Women, almost without exception, are audible.

(b) The travel lecture, notwithstanding the cinema, has still a large public. Because the theme is progressive but identical throughout, there must be variety in presentation. No travel lecture can stand being read. It must be

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

personal and spontaneous, arresting and vital. There is a limited number of adjectives available for the description of scenery, and they are quickly exhausted. Subsequent descriptions therefore are repetition and lack power. A sense of the theatre tells us that there must be more than description. When we travel we are silent before the grandeur or beauty of nature. It is the quaint customs, unusual dress, novel amusements, and unexpected incidents that quicken us. Therefore let the audience hear of them. Whatsoever things are strange and humorous, whatsoever things are ludicrous and even tragic, will be welcomed. The people come to be entertained. The highest element in entertainment is surprise. A lecturer on his return from Canada invited me to be his chairman. He told of cities and occupations. He had been no farther west than Toronto. Leaving the hall, a woman was heard saying to a man: "Yon's a queer notion, putting needles and thread and trouser buttons in every room of the hotel." The man replied: "Ay, but it's a queer place, Canada."

In travel lectures a side-step into geology, physical geography, and native customs, old and modern, brings variation. But my own experience is that popular audiences are most interested in the habits of native animals.

It is not enough for a lecturer who has travelled to say only what he has observed. He must read the history, geology, and antiquity of

THE LECTURE

the countries and acquire knowledge of the birds and beasts and flowers, so that he may refer to them in passing.

Humour and horror are the condiments of the travel lecture diet. In this, as in other free-delivery lectures, there must be preparation and arrangement beforehand, having particular regard to the clock. Memory is a great consumer of time, and one is apt to be led aside and consequently become rushed. It is advisable to divide the lecture into sections; but do not tell the audience you have done so.

The end is all-important. There must be a dramatic close, be it humorous or majestic. It must be perfect 'theatre.' A travel lecture calls for a 'curtain.' It is the 'curtain' which the audience will have in their minds, and by it they will decide of the success of the lecture itself.

(c) In the historical lecture also we have the advantage of progression. The theme develops by the calendar. The disadvantage lies in the theme, which is made up of events. How, then, can an historical lecture 'get across' to the audience? The first essential is for the lecturer to be impregnated with the period. It must be studied not from one angle but from many. The French Revolution is entirely different in the eyes of Edmund Burke and the eyes of Thomas Carlyle. To be interesting both angles must be referred to. The element of contrast brings surprise.

The next variation comes from the word-

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

pictures of the great figures. Here there is an opportunity for the heroic and the humorous, not in the partisan sense but from the point of view of a detached observer.

Because events are dead things, reference may be made to the people and their homes, their trades and amusements. They become the living element. A recital of a folk song or ballad, a description of a dance, a few phrases in the manner of the period, bring diversity. To most of the audience an historical lecture is reminiscent of schooldays. It is well to mention incidents that are in every school history, and a bit of fun may be made by referring to school. The public is always pleased to hear a lecturer mention events of which they are already aware. It satisfies an innocent vanity.

But there must be a theme running through it all, be it Liberty or Autocracy. The audience must know if the lecturer is "on the side of the angels," and on which side he believes the angels to be.

It is a pleasant trick to use the peroration as a summing-up and to end with the words of the title of the lecture. That is as if to say: "Now you know all about it from A to Z."

(d) The scientific lecture presents difficulty, not because of its theme but because of its vastness. It is a problem to know how much the audience does know.

In a Highland village a Glasgow college lec-

THE LECTURE

turer gave a lecture on electricity. Knowing that few of his audience had ever seen electric light, he assumed that they were ignorant. He talked as to children. At the close a fisherman, proposing thanks, remarked that it was a pity that the school children had not been present, "for the lecture was indeed a most suitable one for the children to hear"! Later the school teacher told the visitor that most of the men in the audience knew a good deal about dynamics and electricity.

Nevertheless a lecturer dealing with a scientific subject must assume that many are untutored in the subject. He will therefore set down his fundamentals. But he must not stop there, for he must surprise the untutored into interest and must also satisfy those with knowledge of the subject. Fortunately, the scientific lecturer can carry specimens with him. Let him see that he shows his specimens well, not with his body as a background but with the specimens held well away from his body to a spot where the light will fall upon them. And let him beware of turning his head towards the object. The audience should see the specimen and they should hear him.

(e) The literary lecture is a real test of speaking capacity. In the shorter form of an 'appreciation' or the longer form of a lecture, the secret of success lies in a thorough and intimate knowledge and the sternest preparation. In the

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

shorter form the eulogy should be complete but discreet. It is not doing justice to Robert Tannahill to place him on a level with Robert Burns, even if one is speaking in Paisley, because every one in Paisley knows it is not true. It is not expedient to exalt a modern novelist above the pedestals of the Great Ones. It is good to extol that which is peculiarly his own, but even Aesop could not expand a frog to the size of a cow. Let the appreciation be cordial but always and in all ways true.

If quotations are to be cited, read them beforehand until they are known almost by heart, and have the pages marked by inserts and the passages marked clearly. To fumble with a book and chatter while finding a place disconcerts the audience and reduces the stature of the lecturer by making him appear ridiculous. Most men have a habit of lowering the voice when reading and drooping the ends of sentences. This causes a sensation of deadness in the passage. Let it be firmly read, slowly and with great clearness.

In all written passages, and particularly in poetry, it is essential to study the work and be aware of its nature, whether lyrical, dramatic, or narrative. To dramatize a lyric or narrative is to spoil it. In the lyric the poet has chosen his metre and has thought rhythmically. A lyric should sing itself by the sound of the words and the rhythm of the phrase. It should be

THE LECTURE

read as the poet heard it in his mind before he wrote it. Similarly, narrative has its manner. It is best spoken in phrases without emphasis. But the dramatic poem should be dramatic. One does not speak Mark Antony's forum speech in a monotone.

Purely intellectual criticism of an author's work will not give satisfaction to a popular audience. They must know something of the man, his life, his joys and sorrows, for it is in these that his work was moulded. It is difficult to hold a balance between the man and his work, but if one can in a few phrases tell of the circumstances in which the passage about to be read was written, there is a linking of the human and the literary units.

Let not the human aspect gain control, as is so often the habit of speakers on Robert Burns. Personality must be balanced by philosophy, and literary criticism should temper national and humanistic enthusiasm. Yet who shall divide the man from his genius and the creation of his genius?

With Robert Burns in my mind, the fount of the greatest Niagara of rhetoric in human history, may I remind speakers that his name was—Robert Burns? It adds nothing to the dignity of speaker or speech to refer to him as 'Rab' or 'Rabbie'; and to speak of 'Bobbie Burns' is vulgar.

(f) Although the philosophic lecture is the

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

most difficult, it is so only from the point of view of subject, not of technique. Where there is argument and controversy there is life and movement. Where there is conviction there is strength. The technique of the philosophic lecture has been set down in ancient times. It is by seeking that we find out wisdom. Intellectual strife, the setting up of a proposition and its destruction by analysis and criticism, and the substitution of an alternative, is interesting to all, whether they apprehend the significance of it or not.

But it is essential that the hearers understand the language. Therein lies the difficulty. Philosophy has its own language. Its technical terms are numerous. Their meaning can hardly be expressed in any but technical language. Is it, then, possible to 'put across' a philosophic lecture to those unaware of the technical terms? The history of philosophy returns an emphatic affirmative answer. It has been done by expanding the terms of phrases and explaining them by the use of parables and fables, and the adoption of that method of speaking which is known as "thinking on your feet." In this way the lecturer is able to do justice to his subject without doing injustice to his hearers. But the appearance of "thinking on your feet" can be attained only by deep study and a foreknowledge of the goal to be attained. When Lord Balfour delivered a Gifford Lecture his hearers marvelled

THE LECTURE

that he should converse with them and let them see his mind working. But they did not know that after his lecture had been thought out he spoke it to himself ten times before he spoke it to them. And he did not speak it sitting at a desk with pen in hand and pad on blotter. He knew it was not in that way he was to speak it. He spoke it mentally while he walked. We cannot give the impression of movement of thought unless the thinking has been associated with movement.

Meandering among the philosophies is not a lecture. Before the first words are spoken the ultimate end, the affirmation, must be definitely fixed. Nothing must be allowed to qualify the definiteness of the direction. The ultimate goal must be as inevitable and irresistible as the tragedy that ends a Greek play, and the lecture must move towards that goal with Hellenic directness and purpose. If not, the lecture becomes a fog.

For the ear and the eye of the audience stimulation comes from diversity of treatment, challenge yielding place to light ridicule, the reduction of a proposition to absurdity, and by the use of question and answer in the Socratic method. After a lecture by an expert who had set up an imaginary person called Donald, with whom he argued, a man of eminence remarked that there was something very likeable about Donald. His companion replied: "Aye, and

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

he had brains too." The imaginary had been made so vivid that it lived as an actual being even after the atmosphere had been changed.

The Use of Lantern-slides. Lantern-slides should illustrate a lecture as pictures illustrate a book. They should be technically perfect. Their arrangement beforehand should be made with scrupulous care, each one numbered and marked to show the top. The operator should be gently warned that the success of the lecture depends on him. A burst of laughter at the sight of mounted men fighting on their heads will destroy the effect of a lecture, because the incident will stick in the memory, as the ridiculous often does.

Pointing to the slides is a childish habit.

The lecturer should be so word perfect that the picture will appear on the screen as he speaks its title. To turn to the screen and mumble into it is clumsy and inartistic. Never point to a picture as a picture. If it is necessary to direct attention to some particular part of the picture, let the pointer touch the spot, but the lecturer should speak to the audience. If the picture is well known the title should come into the lecture as if it were not the title, and the picture and title should appear simultaneously. Thus: "Napoleon surrendered to the British and went [slide] aboard the *Bellerophon*."

In lecturing nothing can be left to chance. Prepare, prepare, and still prepare. No matter

THE LECTURE

how often you may have delivered the same lecture, prepare for each audience as if it were the first. Go over the whole lecture mentally. If lantern-slides are to be used, devote an hour to a survey of them, making them clean of thumb-marks. At the same time, think of appropriate phrases in which to introduce them. By this means the slides are fresh, the lecture is fresh, and the audience will feel exhilarated. Let every word be clearly heard. Let the end be strong. When you start to prepare the lecture it may be, as Augustus found Rome, a city of brick. When you deliver it it must be, as Augustus left Rome, a city of marble.

CHAPTER XX

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

THERE is a wide distinction between making a speech after dinner and making an after-dinner speech. It is not uncommon for a politician or a man eminent in some other walk of life to be invited to dine with his friends and supporters with the view to his making a speech of importance. It sometimes happens also that in these days of business clubs, Rotary clubs, and other societies, where members meet at luncheon, a guest is invited whose business it is to address the club on some subject in which he is an expert or in which he is known to be particularly interested.

In these cases the meal is the occasion of the speech and secondary to it. The speech is made after dinner, but it is not an after-dinner speech. It has all the quality and technique of a speech made in other circumstances. Its distinguishing feature is that it is more intimate and personal. It is still a speech to interest, instruct, or persuade.

An after-dinner speech is a form of entertainment. The occasion has not been arranged for the purpose of the speech. The speech is ancil-

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

lary to the occasion. It is not meant to be serious. It is not taken seriously.

We are all presumed to be friends. We have eaten bread together. The atmosphere is that of comfort and curiosity. We are supposed to know each other well enough to be urbane without flattery, arch without coyness, reminiscent without verbosity, and daring without rudeness. We can stand a bit of chaff; we can poke fun at each other; we can see the humorous side of our obsessions. The speech, therefore, should be witty and snappy. It may be personal. It must be spontaneous.

Let the sentences be short and crisp. Let every word have its value and be heard clearly. Let us give ideas, not platitudes.

If you are to propose a toast, think out some very simple theme. The theme is only a peg upon which to hang the wit. Pegs should not be too high nor too long. The second thing to do is to allow the theme to suggest one or two witty sayings. They may be a mere twisting of words or of phrases familiar to the society, or the change of a word in a well-known proverb to bring it within the range of the object of the club or society. By way of example, at a cinema club dinner it is amusing to say: "All is not gold that flickers," or, "Every picture tells a story—some of them a story of bankruptcy," or, "You may hitch your wagon to a star—and see her flop."

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

This playing on words is always pleasing to an audience, especially if you can introduce some of the 'shop' phrases of those whom you are addressing. Therefore, if the occasion is one associated with a trade or business ask some one in the trade to tell you some of the 'shop talk,' and think of one or two of the phrases that can be adapted. When you rise, announce the reason. Do not say: "I rise to propose the toast of the Society." Say: "I have the honour to invite you to drink a toast to the Greenock Horticultural Association." An after-dinner audience likes to sense a certain dignity in the speaker. They are all looking towards the top table, which for the moment is the most important place in the room, even as the speaker is the most important person. Moreover, most of them are members of the Society. You are their guest. They like to feel that you regard it as an honour to be their guest.

The second step is to refer graciously either to your introduction by the chairman or to the Society whose guest you are. You are at liberty to refer to it in humorous terms, but not in depreciatory terms. You may chaffingly depreciate yourself, not as a speaker, but as an outsider. Because you are not a member, you may call yourself an 'alien' or a 'pagan' or a 'beggar at the outer porch.' Do not say you know nothing of the subject. Convey the idea that you value the subject highly and that you would like to be

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

one of so eclectic a group. Then come to grips with your theme and treat it lightly. If it is apt, you may introduce a reminiscence, especially if it refers to some place or circumstance unfamiliar to the audience. Do not say: "That reminds me of an incident," etc. Be bold. "I remember, sir," etc.

I remember a remarkable sensation being caused at a banquet attended by men of importance in the industrial world when one of the speakers, a magnate, said: "I remember, sir, when I was working in the pit . . ." So also a Cabinet Minister gripped a Society audience at a hospital festival by saying: "Once, my lord, when I was an engine greaser . . ." Another instance occurred at a meeting in the House of Commons when, after speeches on China by two young men, Lord Bearsted said: "I remember, sir, forty-eight years ago, standing on the riverbank at Hankow, when there came . . ."

Appropriate quotations give movement. Inappropriate quotations retard movement. They should be spoken not as quotations but as original thoughts, gliding into the speech as the best expression of the thought.

Avoid volubility and flippancy, but better to be voluble or flippant than dull.

It is an absolute rule that controversy must not be introduced into an after-dinner speech. You may refer to controversial matters but only in fun, and then only if some one representing

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

the other side of the controversy is to speak. For example, you may refer to the party colour of a fellow-guest, but in extreme description—*e.g.*, red is 'scarlet,' blue is 'indigo' or 'ultra-marine.'

The end of the speech must be crisp and gripping. It should bring a roar of laughter at a sparkling sally or a round of applause by a glowing peroration. An after-dinner speech without applause of some kind is like a banquet without salt.

If you are to reply to a toast, watch the speaker. Keep your mind in humorous, even saucy mood, ready to snap up a point that can be twisted into genial fun or expanded to absurdity.

Begin by gracious reference to the speech of the proposer. It is presumption to compliment him as a speaker, but pleasing to him and to the audience to hear appreciation of the speech which they have applauded. It is a compliment to him to take up his points, and to do so brings an atmosphere of continuity to the performance.

You may refer to your fellow-guests, not to their physical or personal aspects, but to their position or party. They will enjoy being brought to the notice of the audience, and the audience will enjoy seeing them being chaffed. Whenever you refer to a fellow-guest turn to him with a slight bow. Let your reference create

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

the impression that you are two chums 'giving up cheek to each other.'

In after-dinner speeches you may use decorative and ornamental language in a mock-serious manner, and call a spade anything you like except a spade.

The atmosphere of after-dinner speaking is artificial. It glitters, but it is not gold. There is a convention that nobody wants to hear a speech. That is not true. It is part of the programme and is relished—as the cigars and wine are relished—to the extent that it is good, fragrant, and sparkling.

There are other forms which are equally pleasing, though not technically after-dinner speaking.

It is permissible and pleasing to treat a toast as a fantasy, to speak words and thoughts of beauty or wistfulness. A toast to a town may be pictorialized into a pageant of its history, provided you watch the clock! If that form be adopted, the speaker should choose his incidents so as to bring a contrast of emotions. He must avoid a guide-book narrative. He must dramatize the incidents. The colour must be changed, a romantic episode being followed by a humorous one. Some of the historic worthies, sage or stupid, may be introduced, and the temperament of the townsmen may be 'ticked off.' Every town has a reputation—Aberdeen for thrift, Glasgow for square-toed boots and

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

bowler hats, Edinburgh for exclusiveness and frigidity, Manchester for rain, Liverpool for business acumen, Bradford for Ilkley Moor. There is always a laugh awaiting any reference to the temperament or the commercial product of a town.

Telling stories at dinner is a second-rate performance. To begin by saying: "That reminds me of a story" or "I heard a very good story," is bad. If you have a very apt story, let it glide in of its own accord by such an avenue as "like the Aberdonian who . . ." or "as happened in the case of a young lover who . . ." By that means the story becomes part of the speech instead of being an interloper. If you say: "I heard a very amusing story," the effect is already diminished by the absence of surprise. The audience knows to expect a laugh, and mentally has laughed already. If you leave out the adjective, no one will know whether it is to be tragic, pathetic, or comic. The point will come with a jerk, and score all the better.

Almost any epigram is welcomed after dinner, and if you have coined a good one, you may lead up to it, on the condition that you do not let the audience see that you are leading up to it.

Only very rarely may one be moved to speak seriously in an after-dinner speech. If it should be so, go all out for seriousness. Let the speech throb with it. Unless the colour is strong, an after-dinner audience will think you are fooling.

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKING

After-dinner speaking is of the brain more than of the mind or heart. It is frankly artificial. It is play-acting. Let it be good play-acting, without pretending that it is anything else, and it may be very good fun.

There are a few points worth remembering.

1. Intimacy and friendliness are the characteristics of after-dinner speaking.

2. Rhetoric is not expected. Wit and humour are hoped for.

3. If you tease the top table, let the whole room hear it. An aside to the chairman should be like an aside in a play—heard distinctly by every one.

4. Argument on general propositions seldom 'gets over.' It is personality that wins.

5. However well prepared your impromptu may be, speak them spontaneously. To do this you must be word perfect in the impromptu and in the phrase leading up to it.

6. The fun must be fairly obvious. No one wants to think immediately after dinner.

7. Never distort a speech for the sake of making a joke. You may have six jokes to spill and recall only three. Do not fish around on the chance of remembering another. Finish at three. The others will do for a future occasion.

8. *Taboos*: Religion, serious politics, personalities, complaints, propaganda, *risqué* stories, swear-words, vulgarity, and apology.

CHAPTER XXI

DEBATING

IT is when we come to take part in debate that we appreciate the significance of the 'rules' of public speaking. In debate we are tested as in no other form of speech. We cannot prepare for debate as we prepare for the platform. The equipment we use for the political speech is cumbersome. When we debate we travel light. We have little idea how the subject will be presented. We cannot anticipate what strange turn the debate will take. It may become frivolous and flippant, as it often does in Students' Unions. It may be swept out into very deep waters by a hurricane of passion, as sometimes happens in the House of Commons. It may meander on a drab and muddy stream, in which is no living thing.

Our best equipment is readiness of speech—that is, quickness in arranging our ideas and confidence in finding phrases to express them. If we have been in the habit of memorizing our speeches, or been dependent on notes, we may find that our method fails us just when we are most in need of the stored-up experience of speaking. We shall find ourselves hesitant and

DEBATING

diffident, as if we had never spoken before. That is the reason why so many men who have been great speakers on the platform, and, as a result, are elected to Parliament, fail completely in the House of Commons.

In debate our speeches take their colour, and much of their substance, from the temperament of the assembly at the moment.

The man who is at ease in debate is he who has been accustomed to free speaking, who has stored in his mind the courtesy phrases of speech, who has been in the habit of thinking in ideas and phrases rather than in words, and has learned to gain emphasis by changes of tone, tempo, and intensity.

Moreover, the man who has trained himself to eliminate from his preparation for platform work all the unnecessary sub-divisions of his subject and fasten on the essentials is most ready to detect the false premises, the illogical deductions, the unsound conclusions, of his opponent.

To repeat, bit by bit, what another man has said and give another version is not debating. Debating is the rapier work of speaking. If the thrust is straight to the heart, the result is fatal to the whole body of the argument. But if we do not know enough of the anatomy of speech-making to know where the heart is, we go playing about, imagining we have scored a fatal hit when we have merely scratched a limb.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

Lord Oxford was nicknamed "the sledgehammer" because in debate he detected at once the stone which was the pivotal stone of the building, and, disregarding all the rest, he rained blow after blow upon it until it was shattered. Lord Balfour would sit with an envelope in his hand, waiting for the crux of the argument. He would write down the exact words and let the rest go by. Then, in reply, he would fasten his teeth into it, shake it, toss it upward, throw it downward, tear it, and leave it as a terrier leaves a carpet slipper, "a thing of shreds and patches."

Mr Lloyd George watches and pounces like a cat. Then he plays about, teases, appears to let it go, brings it back, growing always more cruel, until he despatches it with one vicious clutch of open claws.

What, then, qualifies a man to be a good debater?

First, he must know much about the subject, more than is necessary for a platform speech. He must read widely all the arguments on both sides of the controversy. In his preparation he should encourage his mind to suggest the reply to every 'telling point' on the other side. Then he should verify his reply. It may be that none of the stock arguments will emerge in the debate itself, because a good debater, when opening, avoids platitudes and ordinary arguments, and seeks to take his opponents unawares by arguments that are novel, if not unique.

Secondly, he must allow the whole subject

DEBATING

of debate to simmer in his mind in the hope that some original thoughts will come to him. These he must verify and expand by considering what answers may be made. In debate it is well to take up possible answers, though they have not been mentioned.

Thirdly, he must keep himself in perfect control. Excitement, bad temper, querulousness, and personalities destroy argument, however sound it may be. In debate speech should be deliberate, not rapid, with cocksure volubility, but cautious and tentative. The hearers have to grasp the point and assimilate it while you say it. It is better to suggest than to declare, to offer an opinion than to declaim. Let no man attempt to be or succeed in being funny in debate. The funny man has been the wrecker of debating societies. The funny man never wins a vote. A 'cheap' laugh reacts not on the victim but on the perpetrator.

Debate should be conducted with a flowing courtesy to all men. Hundreds of good debating speeches made in public assemblies lose their power because of the impudence and vulgarity of the asides. Indignation and anger are not debating points. It is usually when a man has least to say that he becomes most loud and lurid. Personalities are not argument. Their effect is to disturb the feelings of the 'House.'

The model of debaters is John Hampden. He set the pattern of British debate. He was

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

quick, but he wounded no one. He was weighty, but never dogmatic. He was concise, but avoided no circumlocution of courtesy. He attributed to his opponent an absolute sincerity and a wide knowledge. He referred to those elements in the speech with which he was in agreement. He ventured to inquire whether a certain argument, though worthy of respect because adduced by the honourable gentleman, was of strength sufficient to support the conclusion suggested. He wondered if the argument did not rather lead to another conclusion. That being so, he found that all that had rested upon that conclusion must go. What was left was that with which he agreed and from which he developed a new argument, leading to a conclusion diametrically opposed to that of the honourable gentleman, whom, however, he was mindful to compliment, if he might do so without presumption, on the speech with which he had favoured the House.

Transmuted by time into the modern style of Mr Stanley Baldwin, John Hampden's method remains the pattern and example. The effect of his debating was so powerful that Clarendon, a determined opponent, said of him:

He was of that rare affability and temper in debate, and of that seeming humility and submission of judgment, as if he brought no opinion of his own with him, but a desire of information and instruction. Yet he had so subtle a way of interrogating and, under

DEBATING

cover of doubts, insinuating his objections that he infused his own opinions into those from whom he pretended to learn and receive them.

And Lord Macaulay said of him: "With the morals of a Puritan, he had the manners of an accomplished courtier." There could be no higher compliment to the sincerity and skill of a British speaker in debate.

CHAPTER XXII

PULPIT AND PEW

*“Though I speak with the tongues of men
and of angels . . .”*

THIS is a message from the pew to the pulpit.

We regard preaching as we regard public-speaking. We measure it by the standards of the platform. We expect it to be more noble and more perfect than the platform speech. We expect a sermon to be spoken so that we can hear without strain and receive without irritation. We judge the pulpit drawl, the affected accent, the inflated mouthing, the mincing preciousness, the striving for effect, as abominations. On the platform or the stage these bad habits of speech are the subjects for laughter.

We regard you as a man who has something worth while to say. We expect you to say it as a man says it, as we hear men speak in a hall or a law-court, as we hear you speak in our homes or on the street or in the club-house.

We come to hear you speak of the Truth, the Truth that is eternal and the Truth that concerns us to-day. We hope to hear you speak the

PULPIT AND PEW

Truth in a true way, confidently, spontaneously, directly, not in a way that is unnatural or in a style that is artificial and therefore untrue to yourself. If you adopt a manner of speech which is unnatural and untrue to yourself, you endanger your right to be believed, as well as your right to be listened to. There is no need for you to have a special tone of voice for the pulpit, distinct from that for your daily life. If you affect a special tone of voice that is unnatural it will degenerate into a monotone. It is the natural voice that is flexible. Only the natural voice can respond to your thoughts and feelings. Only the natural voice will change the *tempo* in accord with the flow of thought, or vary in pitch and intensity in sympathy with the feelings of your heart.

We want to be interested. The themes of which you speak are the most interesting of all. But we are not interested in theological subtleties. They belong to the classrooms of theological colleges. Very few of us are 'highbrows,' but we are intelligent. Our schools are the workshop, the office, and the factory. Our universities are the books we read, the talk among friends, the human contacts of daily life. We like to hear you speak, because we credit you with being intellectual and intelligent, more widely read, more given to thought, and more scholarly.

We expect to hear you talk to us about, and

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

explain the fundamentals of, our religion. "Tell us plainly. . . ."

We want you to expound the Bible, not just a text of it taken from its context. We want you to talk to us about ourselves, to help us in character-building, to explain our relationship to God and our neighbour.

We are constantly asking ourselves: "What am I? What must I do? Whither am I going?" Tell us your thoughts and the thoughts of great thinkers concerning these questions.

We assume that you go to your study, as the worker goes to his job, regularly, and to work, that you regard the whole world as the parish of your thought. We suppose that, in addition to literature and philosophy, you know something of the sciences and much of the history which our sons and daughters are studying. We like to feel that your references to science and history are accurate. We are not much influenced by the story that is not true. When you say: "There is a story of King Charles . . ." we expect it to be a true story, because if you use a palpable untruth to prove a truth our young people tell us they are astonished that you should "serve up a bunch of exploded myths."

We know that you study psychology and economics, in both of which we are much concerned; we enjoy always your illustrations from these sciences.

PULPIT AND PEW

In other places we applaud a speaker or laugh with him. It gives to him and to us a moment's relaxation. These mental breaks you can give us equally well by changing the tone of your voice, altering your pace, introducing the parable or references to men of eminence or facts of science. It is not difficult. It is easy, if you will allow your mind to escape from the groove of convention. You will find it easy if you walk about while you prepare your sermon, instead of sitting always at your desk.

We want to forget the clock. Do you not feel there is something lacking if you see us taking out our watches? Nothing pleases us more than to feel, at the end of the sermon, the elation of surprise that it is finished. It is as if we wanted more and had forgotten time in our keenness.

We want to feel that what you are saying is of vital interest to you and that you think it to be of vital interest to us. If we have not that feeling of personal vitality, showing itself in change of tone, emphasis of phrases, and intensity of earnestness, how do you expect us, having heard only once, to carry away in our minds ideas which have been your anxious thought and careful study for days?

Why do you read your sermon? We do not allow our politicians to read to us. As you are full of your subject, could you not trust your cultivated mind to hold it and your brain to find

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

words to express it? Perhaps, having acquired the habit of reading, you are afraid. You may have accustomed yourself to reading so that the power of creative speech has grown dull. You may feel that the preparation that has been devoted to a sermon is wasted if it is not set down in permanent form. Well, set it down for preservation. You will find six months afterwards that it is colourless and flaccid. A sermon needs the intensity of the moment to give it vitality. But if you speak it freely this week and return to the same subject six months later you will find it enriched by the thoughts and experience of the six months and the changed sentiment of the day.

It is more likely that you feel you are master of a finer or clearer language when you write than when you speak. It may be that you are. But it may be that what you consider finer and clearer language in the study is not so fine nor so clear in the pulpit as that which our presence awakes within you.

A simple, direct address, freely spoken, as man to man, is infinitely more potent than a literary essay, however finely read. It has a reward that springs from its own power—the response of the listeners to the immediate thought. That will lead you to develop your argument with a loving intimacy that was undreamed of in your study.

Although our school education was directed

PULPIT AND PEW

towards fitting us to be clerks, we are not all clerks. Some of us till the land, some go to market, some have shops, some are in the professions. Each one of us is unique. Yet we have much in common. All the really big things of life we have in common. But you would surprise and arrest us if you were to draw your illustrations from our means of livelihood instead of always quoting the poets and philosophers.

Give us something to talk about while we are walking home, something to be remembered helpfully during the week. Many of us are forgetful; teach us to remember. Many of us are over-busy; teach us to be calm. Many of us are callous; teach us to be kind. If any one of us be mean, seek us out and blister us into charity. Many of us are deeply concerned about our lives, our children, and the problems of the world. We have hopes and fears and joys and sorrows, successes and disappointments, loyalties and disillusionments. Explore them all. Set them before us that we may see them face to face. Speak to our hearts.

If you are evangelistic, preach your Gospel, but not all the time. "He gave some, teachers. . . ." If you are a metaphysician, by all means tell us your thoughts, but study simplicity of statement, so that we, ordinary folk, will hear you gladly.

Let your sermon have order, so that we may

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

easily follow your argument. Very few of us can, by hearing, remember more than three points of a speech. Why not work on the tried system of three points? If you have three points clear to yourself, you can talk to us about them without reading.

We in the pew like the sermon. Also we like you. We know how difficult it must be to preach to the same people Sunday after Sunday. The visiting minister is welcome for special occasions, and it is good for you to speak to new audiences. But he is unfamiliar. We prefer You. We call you "our minister." Into your words we read your character. The background of your spoken word is your service, your loyalty, your devotion to us, and ours to you. We prefer You.

You need never give a moment's thought to how you may appear learned or literary. You may be as simple as you like, for we are simple folk. Talk to us. Do not treat us as if we were black with sin, waiting for chances to do evil. We are not like that, and we dislike to hear detailed descriptions of sins we have no inclination to commit. We are decent, kindly, honest, God-fearing folk, who are doing our best to live our lives in accordance with the ideals of the Master. So speak clearly to us, speak confidently, speak vitally. Tell us about Him, His Life, His teaching. Tell us as clearly and as intimately as He spoke, awaking the living response

PULPIT AND PEW .

of our hearts to the thoughts and feelings that we know so well but of which we seldom speak.

The Kailyard School of writers is in black disgrace, but have you read "His Mother's Sermon" in Ian Maclaren's *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush*? That story is true.

PART IV: IN GENERAL

CHAPTER XXIII

GENERAL HINTS

THIS is a chapter of hints regarding the incidentals of speech-making. They are important because, if misused, they may mar a good speech, and, if well used, they may enhance the value of a good speech. Their excellence will not make a bad speech good, nor make an insincere speech effective.

1. *Notes.* If you are to use notes do not write them on sheets of paper. Paper flutters and crackles.

Write them on postcards in strong block letters, using red ink for special points. Number the postcards clearly in the right-hand top corner. Cut off the left-hand top corner so that, if they become disarranged, they may be easily rearranged. If you use notes, be bold about them. Do not try to hide them or pretend they are not there. Pretend nothing; for pretence breeds mental diffidence. Set your notes frankly on the table—and then forget all about them.

2. *For the Ear.* To prepare the mind for the atmosphere and accustom the ear to the sound

GENERAL HINTS

of words, it is helpful, before going to the place of meeting, to read (aloud if possible, but if not mentally aloud) a speech by an eminent speaker in the vein appropriate to the occasion.

3. *Courtesy.* Courtesy is the handmaiden of speech. It is not courteous to sneer at anyone. To deride the aged is cruel. To snub the youthful is vulgar. To ridicule religion is offensive. Speech should be of sweet savour even when it is of great strength. A Persian proverb runs: "You will catch more flies with a teaspoonful of honey than with a ewerful of vinegar."

You will have opponents. That does not mean that your arguments are not sound. It is worth ten times as much to make one convert as to enrage a hundred opponents. No man can carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing somebody's beard. But let your opponents hate your ideas, not yourself. Let your manners be such that it is difficult not to admire the principles which have so courteous an exponent.

Do not show bad temper. Do not use swear words. Do not sneer. Do not address an audience as "you" save when attributing to them some virtue. Say "we" when referring to human weaknesses.

Do not attribute base motives to those with whom you disagree. It is worth while arguing only with the sincere.

Do not call your opponents or your former

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

allies 'traitors' or 'twisters,' or say they are unpatriotic. In a democratic country every man is entitled to have an opinion.

Do not pour contempt on those who are not interested in politics. Some people are more interested in music or art or archæology. It is the politically minded who are most interested in politics; but most citizens enjoy a good speech.

4. *Relevance.* Be relevant. The political platform is not the place to advocate vegetarianism, and a banquet is an ill sphere for a speech on total abstinence. Hold on to your theme. If you find yourself wandering from the channel into coves and inlets, bring yourself back to the channel. It is the only safe place to sail. Be afraid of nothing but quackery. If you are entangled in a sentence and cannot find a way out, stop and say: "That seems a bit involved. May I put it in another way?" And then say it simply. The audience will like you for being so frank with them.

5. *Interruptions.* Allow no interruptions to seduce you from your theme. If you have to stop, stop. When you begin again, make no reference to the interruption unless you can make one that is humorous. Then come back to your theme.

Be calm and keep your poise. If the chairman rises to intervene, tell him it is all right. If he persists you must resume your seat. If you are left to deal with the interrupter, do not raise

GENERAL HINTS

your voice. Try to catch what he says and reply to it. If it appears that he is in earnest, take up his point with extreme courtesy. If possible, avoid disputing his facts, for that will probably lead to the flourishing of a newspaper or blue-book. Assume that his facts are true and draw another conclusion from them.

Do not score off a sincere interrupter. If you must hit out, think for a moment and then hit hard.

6. *Statistics.* Nothing is more difficult to understand by the ear than figures. If it is essential to use them, follow these rules:

(a) Give the place of origin to show their authority. Read them from a postcard. The public may trust the good faith of a speaker, but it hesitates to trust his memory.

(b) In quoting money figures give round figures only. The units and shillings distract the audience from the thousands. So do the thousands from the millions. Say: "I leave out the details for the sake of clearness."

(c) Do not ask your audience to do sums in mental arithmetic. If you quote two figures for the sake of contrast, subtract one from the other and give the result. If you say: "In 1931 our exports of manufactured goods were 261 million 718 thousand four hundred and thirty-five pounds, and in 1932 they were 198 million 842 thousand seven hundred and four pounds," and then ask: "How do you account for the

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

difference?" the answer will be a bewildered stare. But if you say: "Let us take the case of our exports of manufactured goods in 1931 and 1932. In 1931 they were in value 262 millions—in 1932 199 millions. That is a decrease of 63 millions. How are we to account for the difference of 63 million pounds?" Then the audience will be interested and expectant, as if saying: "Heaven knows; you tell us." In that way figures, which usually have a tendency to bring a stop to a speech, can be used to encourage expectancy. Expectancy is as valuable an asset to a speaker as to a novelist.

With large audiences it is better to paint with a large brush. Keep the details and statistics for small audiences. At all times have it in mind that when dealing with human affairs it is necessary to be human. Statistics are sub-human and do not always support the proposition they are used to strengthen.

7. *Quotations.* There is no plagiarism in public speaking. If you quote a phrase let it come spontaneously, as if it were your thought at the moment expressing itself. Do not name the author by saying: "As Shakespeare says . . ." or "In the words of Robert Burns . . ." They are not authorities. Speak the phrase or line as if it were your own. Those who know it will be happy to meet an old friend. Those who do not know it will be quite pleased to meet a new acquaintance.

GENERAL HINTS

The only book which is regarded as authoritative is the Bible. If you quote do not say: "As the old Book has it . . ." or make any reference to it. Take it for granted that every one knows the Bible.

Do not quote the Scottish metrical psalms and paraphrases to English audiences. They will think you are misquoting the Psalms, and if you mention 'paraphrase' they will think only of the school task, in which they probably had little pleasure, of taking a piece of perfect prose or poetry and rewriting it in a less perfect form.

8. *Funny Stories.* In face of the advice of every book I have read on the subject, I recommend you not to tell stories in a speech. The essential of effectiveness is atmosphere. We have to create it and hold it. A funny story may bring an explosion of laughter, but the explosion will blast the atmosphere and leave an audience at zero. That means that the speaker will have to build his atmosphere again.

9. *Anecdotes.* Anecdotes may be useful to press home a point, but should be used sparingly, if at all. If you are to use them, study them beforehand. Let them be short, crisp, and to the point. Clear away all elaboration and let the point come out speedily and obviously. They should have the austerity of a Phil May drawing. They are like a pencil—the only thing that matters is the point. Therefore cut away the wood and make the point sharp.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

When you go to a meeting leave the 'mother-in-law' and the 'bad eggs' at home with the 'drink victim.'

10. *Analogies.* Analogies and illustrations are used to develop a theme, to clarify an idea or to prove the truth of a suggestion by reference to some other aspect of life of which the truth is admitted or obvious.

As the purpose is to clarify, it follows that the analogy must be with something familiar and more simple than the idea itself. To use an illustration which the audience does not recognize is to befog the idea it is meant to clarify. To use an analogy which is not familiar makes the idea more difficult to apprehend. The conception behind illustration and analogy is: "You all know so-and-so. Well, my proposition is just like that. As the one is true, so is the other." By using erudite and abstruse analogies we do not show ourselves to be learned. All we do is to demonstrate that we cannot make a speech. Illustrations from classical mythology presuppose a knowledge which only a few in an audience possess. Instead of enforcing an argument, they weaken it. Besides which, they smell of the study and the midnight oil. It is well to take nothing for granted. Historical and geographical analogies should be expanded. There are some that have become part of general speech, and need not be explained if they are used generally, but should be explained if used par-

GENERAL HINTS

ticularly. 'Crossing the Rubicon' is accepted as the equivalent of 'making a decision.' But few people in an audience could identify the incident. If, therefore, it is to be used not as a phrase but as an historical analogy implying the making of a deliberate and unalterable decision in similar circumstances, then the circumstances of Cæsar's crossing must be explained. "You remember," etc.

Simplicity, aptness, and familiarity are the characteristics of the helpful illustration and analogy.

11. *Parables and Fables.* The use of parable and fable, which are stories not true in fact but bearing the impress of truth in spirit, converts a mystery into an everyday incident. It supports the reasonableness of a remote proposition by showing that it has its counterpart in familiar experience. It has the peculiar effect also of enhancing the familiar experience into a profound truth. The mind of man has been transformed and the dross of life transmuted into gold by a few parables spoken among groups of everyday folk in Palestine. It is one of the paradoxes of psychology that the mind will apprehend a great truth through the medium of a parable which is not true in fact.

The Parables of Jesus are simple and commonplace. They touch familiar, everyday incidents and objects. But they were used to express the deepest thoughts of life. They have become the language of the world.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

Æsop's fables have a universal appeal, but it is not sufficient to say: "You remember Æsop's fable of the fox which lost its tail." You must tell the fable—if possible in the exact words.

12. *Humour*. Humour is a rich quality. Its value lies not so much in the amusement of the audience as in the suggestion to the audience of broadmindedness and poise on the part of the speaker. It should create not an explosion, but a genial and kindly glow. It should bring smiles and chuckles, but not laughter. An audience is very ready to smile at the gentlest touch. In the little introduction of the lecturer on Egypt there are several smiles. We said that usually we had to provide our entertainment ourselves. There will be chuckles at that, for the audience will remember their attempts. We said we should all like to travel. That will bring "Hear! Hear!" and smiles. If we were to add: "But most of us never get farther than Rothesay (or Margate)," there would be chuckles again. A touch of absurdity is a relish, but, like relish, it must be applied lightly lest the joint lose its flavour in the sauce. Audiences like being chaffed so long as there is friendliness in the banter.

The essence of humour is spontaneity. It is the most individual element in speech. It cannot be taught, for it differs as each individual differs. It is the speaker's unique attribute.

13. *Wit*. Humour is the fun of the heart, wit is the fun of the brain. Humour is a play

GENERAL HINTS

on ideas, wit is a play on words. A speaker should regard wit as a temptation, except after dinner. It is as easy to be witty as it is difficult to be humorous. Wit is artificial, humour is spontaneous. Wit is apt to become a habit, and has a tendency to become personal. A speaker is the guest of his audience. He should not use his position to hurt their feelings or belittle those whom they may admire. You do not belittle those to whom you refer humorously, but wit has the ring of conscious superiority, and when it is personal almost always has in it the elements of a sneer. As a means of attack wit is valueless. If you reduce the stature of your opponent, you reduce your own. The more worthy of attack you make your opponent to appear, the more worthy you make yourself as his challenger. You may make Mr Baldwin, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, or Mr Lloyd George look like futile pigmies. But do not delude yourself into believing that you loom big by reducing their stature. You may look like a small terrier yapping at a bull-dog.

It is well to remember that a meeting, however much it may be an occasion for comedy, is not an appropriate place for a music-hall turn. Except among university undergraduates, no man has made an enduring reputation by wit, except the reputation of being a wit. Many who have had the elements of greatness in them have doomed themselves to mediocrity by its use.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

Wit is twin sister to sarcasm, which is the greatest danger of all. It is so easy. It is so striking at the moment. It is a good starter, but a bad stayer. I have known men in Parliament who have sacrificed friendship for an epigram, and have been left with many quips but no friends.

You may be sarcastic about ideas. You may ridicule ideas. You may pour scorn upon ideas. It is third-rate speaking, but it may be done. But never be sarcastic or witty about a man or hold him up to ridicule, hatred, or contempt. There are men who have done it, and made themselves hated when they thought they were being admired.

Even when you ridicule an idea, you run the risk of wounding the feelings of those who believe in it, without the compensation of having proved the idea to be wrong. The purpose of public speaking of all kinds is to win hearers to the speaker's side. If he succeeds in doing that, it follows that they will leave the other. The most valuable convert is the one who comes regretfully.

14. *Pathos*. Humour and pathos should be driven in tandem. You have noticed how Sir James Barrie and Mr Noel Coward bring an audience to the brink of sighs, and then, by a quaint touch of humour, lift them joyously into the sunshine. So in speaking humour springs from pathos. Indeed, in pure humour there is always an element of pathos.

GENERAL HINTS

Only an actor can 'get across' pathos or humour that is prepared beforehand. True pathos is a product of the atmosphere. If the atmosphere in which it is prepared is different from that in which it is uttered it will degenerate into 'sob-stuff' and bathos. The audience will quickly detect it, and rebel. But if it comes spontaneously and inevitably it has in it an element of tragedy which the audience will accept because it is the audience which has given it. Then is your heart akin to the heart of your hearers in a sincere expression of true feeling—and that is a lovely interlude in a speech.

15. *Emphasis.* Emphasis is best obtained by contrast. Singers say: "If you want to put it on, you must first take it off." That is to say, if you desire to emphasize some special passage, you must reduce the tone or the volume immediately before, and then increase for emphasis, or you must increase before and reduce for emphasis. Shouting is not emphasis; it is difficult to hear a speaker who is shouting. You may emphasize by altering tone, by lowering the voice, by increasing resonance or by reducing speed. Most speakers find that emphasis is a natural quality which shows itself in response to the intensity of the thought or feeling. Pace and pitch and volume correspond to the nature of the feeling. The keener you are the more magnetic you become. Do not emphasize a word. That looks as if you were a little Jack Horner

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

showing off a plum. Emphasize a phrase. Only in that way can you emphasize its meaning.

16. *Simile and Metaphor.* Simile is a comparison of one thing with another. Metaphor is the personification of one thing in another. Their use adds colour to speech; the colours should not be mixed.

We may store our memory with apt similes, creating them from observation and thought. In conversation one simile does duty for a multitude of occasions, but on the platform an appropriate simile will strengthen the thought by association and suggestion. In conversation we say "black as soot," irrespective of the precise significance of the word 'black.' "Black as soot" from a platform is pointless, even if 'black' is used with reference to colour only. "Black as a raven's wing" adds a quality to the blackness even to those who have never seen a raven. "Black as the pit" associates 'blackness' with darkness and horror. "Black as sin" conveys the impression of moral degradation, because purity is associated with spotless white. "Black as death" connotes a hopeless outlook.

Those who speak often in public create their similes to correspond with the impression they want to create.

Even more care must be taken with metaphor, for metaphor is the genius of public speech. Obviously it must be in terms that are understood by the people. Allusions to classical

GENERAL HINTS

mythology should be taboo. They presuppose a knowledge of the classics, which very few people have. Their use gives the impression that the speaker is showing off or putting on airs. Besides which, the doings and sayings of gods and goddesses are not authoritative examples or admonitions for the people of the twentieth century.

When creating similes and metaphors we do not need to be afraid of using a few extra words to heighten the effect. Especially is this the case when there is a feeling for humour. A noted speaker, referring to a distinguished Parliamentarian's attempt to found a new party, said: "He summoned the elect. He thought his summons would have the power of Gabriel's trumpet. It sounded like the call of the muffin-man." There was a merry chuckle.

Shortly afterwards the same idea was used by another speaker, who said: "He summoned the elect. He thought his summons would have the power of the trump of the Archangel Gabriel. It sounded like the call of a muffin-man recovering from influenza."

The distinction lay in the sledge-hammer rhythm of the first part and the ridiculous suggestion of the pathetic attempt of the muffin-man.

A Cabinet Minister in the House of Commons said that sometimes the Government had to "row against the tide." Mr Lloyd George,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

speaking after him, said the Government was not rowing against the tide. It was "trying to punt upstream with a withy." These pictorial metaphors grip by their unusualness and completeness. All the world has heard of "ploughing a lonely furrow," "a croaking raven on a withered branch," "I raise again the tattered flag I found upon the stricken field," "terminological inexactitude," and "a cold and frigid lie." There is a difference in breadth between the concrete and the metaphorical. "The poor have to suffer for the follies of the rich." That may or may not be true. But it does not sound so true as "The cottage has to suffer for the follies of the Court," or "The lowly have to suffer for the follies of the proud."

It is wealth of vocabulary and phrase that makes such expressions possible to a speaker. If he can speak in that manner he will be called an orator.

17. *Dramatic.* If the thought lends itself to dramatic speech, be dramatic. After hearing a dramatic end of a speech a man turned to his neighbour and said: "I have no use for these inspirational speeches." The other replied: "No, I can't do it either." Drama is effective only if intermittent. A long speech in dramatic form is a strain on speaker and hearer alike. Strain is the sign of artificiality. If you use the dramatic style, let it be on a subject that has in it the elements of drama. If you show righteous

GENERAL HINTS

anger, let it be at something that is worthy of so splendid an emotion. If you feel urged to denounce something, hesitate until you are sure that it deserves to be denounced because of its moral turpitude. Do not engage in rhetorical denunciation of a thing which does no more than annoy you. Drama has a purpose higher than to express irritation.

Moreover, negative speech has seldom the power of affirmative speech. When you declare the rightness of what you believe, you are strong and safe. When you declare the wrongness of what others believe, you are less strong and in danger. .

18. *Gesture.* There is rhythm in gesture, but none in gesticulation. A gesture is an idiom of speech. Gesticulation is a sign of lack of self-control. Gesture is the reserve battalion of the speaker, ready to enforce or strengthen when called upon, but not taking an active part in the show. In speaking, as in golf, it is essential to have a good stance and an easy swing, and the more natural they are the better.

19. *The Pause.* Do not pause before a word to emphasize it. You will break the rhythm of the phrase and take away from the completeness of the thought.

Use very sparingly the rhetorical pause. The public knows the trick too well. It creates a feeling of: "Now, what can you say to that, my boy?"

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

If you and the audience are worked up, you will pause from time to time. But that will be natural, not rhetorical.

20. *Versatility*. Do not be afraid to speak on any subject. The craft of speech-making is like the craft of piano-playing. Once you are master of your instrument you can play anything from a Moody and Sankey hymn to a Liszt rhapsody. Similarly, a speaker, if he gives one per cent. of the care to his craft that the piano-player gives to his, will be able to speak confidently and interestingly on any subject from potatoes to Paradise. He will have to prepare by study of the subject beforehand. For short speeches the subjects are usually of such a nature that a man of reasonable observation and some reading has already some knowledge of them and, what is of more importance in a speech, some opinion. In short speeches ideas are more interesting than facts.

21. *Extempore*. 'Free speech' is speaking after preparation but without relying on written matter or memory. Extempore speech is speaking without preparation. One is not often called upon without warning. As a rule the speaker is told at the beginning of the meeting that he will be asked to "make a few remarks" or propose a vote of thanks. There is ample time for preparation. The speech of the chief speaker will remind you of an incident or arouse a thought. Watch for an idea which he does not exhaust.

GENERAL HINTS

Then, when summoned, do not say you have been called upon suddenly. Get to grips at once by a few phrases of appreciation, bring in your incident, amplify the idea you noted, express the thanks of the meeting, and sit down. The last phrases should be such as to encourage applause.

22. *Hat-night.* This is a favourite test of extempore speaking. When you receive your subject, relax for a moment to see if the thought of the subject will bring thoughts about it. Then arrange the ideas in the form of a pyramid. The base consists of general observations on the subject. First tier, what others have said or thought about it. Second tier, an appropriate incident or parable. Third tier, what you think about it. Apex, what all ought to think about it.

If you feel humorous, let yourself go. If you feel serious, hold yourself in.

23. *Open-air Speaking.* No experience is of more value than speaking in the open-air. It gives assurance, exercises the lungs, compels the voice to be resonant for fear of hoarseness, keeps the sentences poised to the end, restrains exaggeration through fear of the interrupter, teaches good temper, maintains the theme, and excites quickness of thought. Young speakers can begin as chairmen, whose business it is to gather the crowd, and may make their speeches without fearing to trespass on the speaker's preserves. It is always 'free speech,' and generally extempore.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

In the open-air the speaking pace is slower, enunciation is more deliberate, and the points of the speech have to be made more clear. The sentences are shorter, the words are simpler. There is no temptation to use parentheses and qualifications. Firm and direct, clear and simple, good-humoured and sincere—these are the qualities which make a convincing open-air speech, and these are the qualities which are made by speaking in the open air.

CHAPTER XXIV

MAKING A VOCABULARY

THE public speaker needs an abundant store of words. He needs them not as words only but as parts of a phrase. He uses them best when they come pat to the tongue as the natural expression of his meaning.

Learning lists of words, apart from other words, is accumulating lumber. Books which advise readers to learn lists of words are useless and harmful. We cannot learn to speak a language by memorizing vocabularies. It may help us to read but not to speak. We think in expressions. We should learn in expressions, because we are to speak naturally, and we can do that only in phrases.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that an unusual word destroys the simple directness of speech. It does not. On the contrary, it arrests the attention and adds interest to the sentence.

Ordinary people understand the significance of several thousand words which they never use in conversation. The vocabulary of conversation is small. The vocabulary of reading is considerable. The public speaker has to stock his

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

speaking vocabulary, so that he may be able to express the same thought in different ways, and have at his command words to express shades of meaning.

Speaking-power is like a summer-time fountain fed from a tank. "The cistern fills; the fountain overflows." The store of water which makes the pressure determines the power of the fountain. If the tank is empty the result is hot air.

It is unfair to expect the brain to create on the spot the right expression, but it is not unfair to expect it to provide the exact expression from the stock with which it has been furnished. We cannot speak beyond the range of our vocabulary. If we try to remember words because they are appropriate or decorative the mind will be diverted from the theme which is the purpose of our speaking. The larger the vocabulary, the easier the speaking.

Two ways of adding to word-power are absorption and construction.

Absorption is the product of intelligent reading and listening. Construction is the product of deliberate intention. Those who read the Bible intelligently become permeated with simplicity of word and poise of phrase. Those who read Shakespeare acquire the strength of noun and verb. Those who read the lyric poets absorb a richness of adjective and adverb. But to have the alliance of these benefits for speaking

MAKING A VOCABULARY

we must say them as well as see them, and recognize them by their sound as well as their spelling.

The same result may be obtained more convincingly by deliberate effort. Take a word and speak it in a phrase. It is not necessary to speak it aloud, though it is the surer way. Make other phrases in which it appears. It will soon ally itself with other words, often alliterative. It will find itself in contrast with other words.

Take, for example, the word 'turbulent.' It is interesting to know from the dictionary that it means "disturbed, tumultuous, insubordinate, disorderly," but that does not help us much as speakers, because in public speech these words do not signify the same thought. Nor is it of great value to a speaker to know that the antonyms of 'turbulent' are "quiet, calm, orderly."

What is of value to the speaker is to have 'turbulent' at hand to express the state or quality of something else.

A turbulent mob is different from a disturbed mob, an insubordinate mob, and a disorderly mob. 'Turbulent mob' is automatic. What is desirable is that such phrases as "turbulent Dervishes," if we are talking of the Sudan, "turbulent phrases," if we are talking of an author, "turbulent with passion," if we are describing an argument, should be made similarly automatic.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

If we use this method of building-in words we shall find ourselves adding words. We shall talk of "tired and turbulent schoolboys"; "these trying and turbulent times." We shall be led on to contrasts, "splendid but turbulent tribesmen," "this joyous though turbulent river."

By this means we free ourselves from the stereotyped form of speech that serves in conversation but is colourless on the platform. We do not destroy the clearness of conversation, we raise it to a higher level.

There are hundreds of phrases which are used in public speech that are seldom used in conversation. It is well to make these automatic also, so that they may be spoken as incidentals only, and sometimes, let it be said frankly, as opportunities to frame the words of the point that is to follow.

As an example take the word 'comparison.' In conversation we are content with "In comparison with," "There is no comparison," and "Comparisons are odious" (which is only true of persons). In public speaking we have a multitude of phrases. "An interesting comparison may be made between"; "If I may pursue the comparison a little further"; "Without making invidious comparisons"; "They are beyond comparison"; "Between them there is no basis of comparison"; "In comparison with what he might have done with such opportunities."

This may seem like ringing the changes. It

MAKING A VOCABULARY

is more than that. It is introducing variety, and in many cases gives to the audience the impression that, though the speaker holds his views strongly, he is stating them fairly.

A French writer has made a copious list of hundreds of turns of speech all of which may be made part of the automatic machinery of a French speaker.

We may adopt his method and adapt it to our form of public speaking, particularly because our own John Hampden was the most complete exponent of the use of such phrases of grace.

INTRODUCTION

I have no wish to prolong a discussion on a subject which has already been fully debated.

If I may invite the attention of the members for a few moments . . .

I must speak with decision, but I hope I may not wound the susceptibilities of any of my hearers.

It is far from being my wish to controvert opinions which I know are to some of those present almost convictions.

I may be permitted to remind you that on a former occasion . . .

If I may do so without presumption . . .

MODESTY

I hesitate to push my argument beyond these limits, but . . .

It may appear to be a matter of speculation only,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

but I shall try to show that there are grounds in history . . .

I confess I approach the subject with some hesitancy because . . .

However much we may wish it to be otherwise, we must admit the fact.

STATISTICS

I need only to refer to . . .

It will be remembered that . . .

Many of you may remember that Mr Gladstone said in 1868 . . .

I have the figures before me. . . .

I can, if it is so desired, give the exact words, but I have not altered in any particular the meaning of the . . .

There are other authorities equally worthy of respect whom I could summon in support of my proposition.

CONTRADICTION

Such a statement is so serious and so directly opposed to what seems to me to be the truth that I must deal with it at greater length.

No one versed in the subject could allow such a statement to pass unchallenged.

There is no foundation in fact for such an assertion, as I hope to show.

COURAGE

I am not disposed to seek refuge in silence . . .

I withdraw nothing. I qualify nothing.

MAKING A VOCABULARY

I abide by what I have said. Until it is proved false, it stands.

I accept the consequences that may flow from what I have said.

Who is there that dares to contest the right of a citizen of Great Britain . . . ?

IMPERSONAL

I shall try not to allow personal considerations or personal feeling to enter into the discussion.

I have too much respect for the Constitution of this country to . . .

As a result are we not forced to the conclusion that . . . ?

GOODWILL

It is no satisfaction to me to differ so completely from the views which so many of you have held.

I am well aware of the strong feeling of personal loyalty which he inspires.

Why should we be rivals? The inevitable end of rivalry is conflict, and in conflict one side is conquered.

If we can bring ourselves to take this step, we may open a new era, full of hope where there was despair.

We do not hesitate to acknowledge the splendid services that the — party has rendered to the nation.

We accuse no one. We would injure no one. Let us wipe out the scars of former conflicts.

ATTACK

Upon what ground of sense or reason can such an argument be based?

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

Have they given a moment's thought to the inevitable results of such an action?

Such a proposal is as dangerous as it is ridiculous.

This is the last resource of a party which has lost the confidence of the people because it had no confidence in its own policy.

Such are the fruits of a system which . . .

These phrases and hundreds like them require no thought. Make up similar phrases for yourself, so that at a second's notice the appropriate one comes leaping to the lips. Watch carefully that they are strong at the end. Many speakers allow a sentence to dribble out. They have known the beginning, but before they have thought of the end they are thinking ahead for the beginning of the next. The end of the sentence is the last thing heard, and should be firm and compact. It is added strength to a sentence to end it with a noun or a verb.

CHAPTER XXV

AUDIENCES

IT has already been said that a speaker to be a success must study his audience, understand it, and like it. We may add that he should like speaking. Experience teaches the best avenue of approach. He will learn, if he does not already know, that children have a lively sense of the ludicrous and a relish for mystery. The laughter of a crowd of children is the most joyous sound in the world, and few sights are more compelling than a sea of pink faces with eyes round with wonder. Children are much more interested in stories and parables of naughty children and mischievous animals than of good ones. They are so accustomed to being called naughty that they find a sympathy and kinship with the naughty ones—naughty but not wicked, a mischief but not a liar, teasing but not cruelty. The tribute of children to naughtiness is laughter; to goodness, tears. The man who plays with the tears of children is a cad.

Boys and Girls. Boys and girls are much alike in their nature. They are romantic, and not sentimental. They both enjoy school stories, and prefer stories about boys to those about girls. Boys

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

are more modern than girls. They like hearing of heroes of activity, while girls prefer heroes of character. In a mixed audience mechanics and speed attract only the boys. Exploration, medical research, bacteriology, and the habits of "birds, beasts, bugs, and beetles" appeal to all.

Youth. Youth is permeated with two strong impulses, heroic endeavour and confidence of achievement, self-sacrifice and self-realization. They respond to a summons to activity for noble ends. They are Utopians. They do not ask: "Will it work?" or "Will it pay?" but "Is it right?" Most of them between the ages of seventeen and twenty-two would take on the job of running the British Empire single-handed. They respond to positive, constructive ideas. Criticism and declamation leave them cold. They are of the creative age. Biological changes influence their minds with the ambition to succeed. They would like to be a success. They would like also to be saints. It is possible to be both.

Middle-aged. A speaker may presume that an audience composed of men and women between the ages of twenty-seven and fifty-five is an audience of married people whose attention is concentrated on home, children, and ways and means. They are sentimental and altruistic. Their ambition is to give their children a better chance than they had themselves. Most of them

AUDIENCES

have sacrificed the ambition for success which they had in adolescence. They now look forward to realizing their ambitions through their children. Their chief object is security—for their families. They dare not take risks which may mean distress for wife or husband and children. Mothers, even more than fathers, are extremely hesitant to change the assured for the problematical.

In such an audience almost all are hard up, but not discontented. It is insulting to them to talk in terms of the rich. They are content to see the affluent on the cinema screen, and they have no very high opinion of them.

Women's meetings are interested in all subjects. The Mothers' Meeting and Women's Guild, the butt of so many jests, are the most eager for knowledge. They are sentimental, but they enjoy laughing at sentimentalism. They work hard and enjoy hearing a speaker refer to their work. Every public man should have a knowledge of the contents of an ironmonger's shop and should know the technical terms for kitchen utensils. It must be remembered that the housewife meets few people except the family and her tradesmen. A man meets as many new people in a week as a woman meets in a year. Women like to hear about people, and they love laughter. This is a social virtue.

Elderly Folk. Elderly folk do not care to have their ideas disturbed. They are 'set.' They

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

enjoy hearing what younger people are doing in the world, and are interested in new movements and new ideas; but the interest is detached. They are onlookers and have no wish to be converted. Because the aged live much in the past, illustrations drawn from the days of their youth refresh them and give them pleasure. Aged folk are gentle, and love beauty of thought.

The West End. The peculiar quality of a West End audience, a *bourgeois* audience, is the range of their knowledge, not its intensity. Most of the audience have special knowledge of their own business, and general knowledge of almost all other subjects, except science and economics. They have contact with literature, art, music, the theatre, social customs. What they do not know they feel they ought to know. The avenues of appeal are, therefore, unlimited. The subjects which may be used for analogy and illustration are unrestricted.

Such an audience is good-natured. It enjoys a good speech even if it disagrees with the views of the speaker. It is tolerant, rather reserved, and not inclined to exuberance. It is disposed to maintain the existing order of things, honours the Throne, the Church, Parliament, and the City. It regards Great Britain as specially chosen by a benign Providence as the instrument for His purposes, and the British Empire as the manifestation and proof of its belief. It is an audience that is easily moved to pity, and enjoys

AUDIENCES

the feeling of giving. So long as it is not asked to give up its privileges, it is willing to give of its superfluity, and even to sacrifice. It is capable of quite extraordinary fidelity to conviction and of passionate devotion to what it conceives to be right. It appreciates instinctive culture even in those who have none of the conventional manners of polite society. It gives courtesy and receives it with grace. Its sense of humour is of the quality favoured by *Punch*, which is a mark of its inherent sincerity. Cant, humbug, flatulence, and artificiality are anathema.

The East End. The feature of an East End audience is its interest in economics and history. It may not be intellectual, but it is intelligent. It is very ready to pin its faith to a man in whom it has confidence, and dislikes to hear such a man ridiculed or depreciated. It is 'sporting,' enjoys hard knocks in argument, but resents a blow below the belt. It is not interested in what it is to get for nothing, and dislikes those who talk as if it were. But it is interested in enhancing the quality of its own life for the glorious privilege of being independent. The men are chiefly interested in work and wages, for these are the bedrock of their family life. Though they may have an accent, they consider it 'cheap' on the part of a speaker to imitate their accent. They prefer the speaker to speak in his own accent. A lively sense of humour and a power to laugh at their own woes is combined with a joy in

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!

hearing fine speech, coloured by humour and eloquence. Notwithstanding the frequency with which it has been the victim of eloquence and rhetoric, an East End audience enjoys both. The people have a craftsman's appreciation of seeing and hearing a man do his job well. They like to applaud, they are quick to laugh, but are eager to hear every word and note every point made by a speaker. They resent above all things a speaker who talks down to them. They like to see in a speaker the qualities which they hope their children will possess.

All audiences recognize and appreciate sincerity, and in their decisions lean to virtue's side.

