

looked for from our public servants. This to a certain extent proves our good sense, for were those frequent displays of turgid rhetoric which one is wont to hear in the legislative halls of the United States, and of other foreign nations, to take place in our House of Commons or Chambers of Assembly, the despatch of public business would be retarded, and the patience of our more practical listeners would be over-taxed. But, gentlemen, whilst we should avoid on the one hand the mere parade of fine words, we should on the other endeavour to get rid of that confusion of ideas which is but too visible in the addresses of unpractised speakers of the present day. For what is true eloquence? To reply in the words of a great authority—"It is the faculty of making oneself master of the minds of the listeners, guiding them by his mind, causing them to think as he thinks, and thus imparting to their wills the direction of his own."* How then can a man who is not master of his own thoughts, guide the thoughts of others? How can a speaker whose ideas are floating confusedly in his brain, and which, like the shipwrecked companions of Æneas, "*apparent rari nantes in gurgite vasto*;" how, I ask, can such an one give direction to the ideas of his audience, no matter how intelligent, no matter how indulgent that audience may be? It behoves us, therefore, who would succeed in gaining this influence, to guide ourselves by certain rules which can never be forgotten with safety, nor neglected with impunity. *Firstly*. We must thoroughly know what we want to speak about; we must become masters of our subject before-hand, and make it our own by study—by meditation and by concentration of thought, and by a careful perusal of those authorities which bear upon it: without such preparation our eloquence becomes just so much plain water, bearing along nought but empty words, and producing only disgust and nausea in the hearers—in fact we become mere word-spinners. Read the lives of the ancient orators, and you will learn that Demosthenes devoted years of solitary preparation to the composi-

* M. Bautain, Professor of Oratory at the Sorbonne.