

of the Greek which might not in circumstances like those for which they were composed, with a few alterations, be delivered before our tribunals, or our public assemblies. Some of Demosthenes' very finest orations were those in private causes, and composed to be delivered by the parties, one of them by himself. They are very little studied now, but they well deserve ample attention both for the matter and the composition. The example of the ancient masters is ever to be kept before you in one important particular, their extreme care in preparing their speeches. Of this the clearest proofs remain. Cicero having a book of passages to be used on occasions is well known; indeed, we have his own account of it and of the mistake he once made in using it (*Ad. Att. xxi.*, 6), but the book of *præmia* which Demosthenes had has come down to us, the only doubt being raised (though I hardly think there can be any), whether they were, like Cicero's passages, kept ready for use, or passages prepared of speeches, the preparation of which on the whole he had not time to finish. One thing is certain, that he was very averse to extempore speaking, and most reluctantly, as he expressed it, "trusted his success to fortune;" and his orations abound in passages, and even parts of passages, again and again used by him with such improvements as their reception on delivery or subsequent reflection suggested.

NECESSITY OF DUE PREPARATION FOR SUCCESS IN ORATORY.

But I dwell upon the subject at present in order to illustrate the necessity of full preparation and of written composition to those who would attain real excellence in the rhetorical art. A person under the influence of strong feelings or passions, pouring forth all that fills his mind, produces a powerful effect on his hearers, and often attains without any art the highest beauties of rhetoric. The untrained speaker who is also unpractised, and utters according to the dictates of his feelings, now and then succeeds perfectly; but in these rare instances he would not be the less successful for having studied the art, while that study would enable him to succeed equally in all he delivers, and would give him the same control over the feelings of others, whatever might be the state of his own. Herein indeed consists the value of the study; it enables him to do at all times what nature only teaches on rare occasions. Nor is there a better corrective of the faults complained of in the eloquence of modern times than the habitual contemplation of the ancient models, more especially the chaste beauties of the Greek compositions, and the diligent practice of severe written preparation. It is the greatest of all mistakes to fancy that even a carefully prepared passage cannot be delivered before a modern assembly. I once contended on this point with an accomplished classical scholar, and no inconsiderable speaker himself, Lord Melbourne, who at once undertook to point out the passages which had been prepared and those which were given off-hand and at the inspiration of the moment. He was wrong in almost every guess he made.

THE HISTORIAN'S DUTY AS AN INSTRUCTOR OF THE PEOPLE.

It is not by merely abstaining from indiscriminate praise, and by dwelling with disproportionate earnestness upon the great qualities and passing over the bad ones of eminent men, and thus leaving a false general impression of them, that historians err and pervert the feelings and opinions of mankind. Even if they were to give a careful estimate of each character, and pronounce just judgment upon the whole, they would still leave by far the most important part of their duty unperformed, unless they also framed their narrative so as to excite an interest in the worthies of past times; to make us dwell with delight on the scenes of human improvement, to lessen the pleasure too naturally felt in contemplating successful courage or skill, whenever these are directed to the injury of mankind; to call forth our scorn of perfidious designs however successful; our detestation of cruel and blood-thirsty propensities, however powerful the talents by which their indulgence was secured. Instead of holding up to our admiration the "pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war," it is the historian's duty to make us regard with unceasing delight the ease, worth, and happiness of blessed peace. He must remember that—

"Peace hath her victories
"No less renowned than war's;"

and to celebrate these triumphs, the progress of science and of art, the extension and security of freedom, the improvement of national institutions, the diffusion of general prosperity—exhausting on such pure and wholesome themes all the resources of his philosophy, all the graces of his style, giving honour to whom honour is due, withholding all incentives to misplaced interest and vicious admiration, and not merely by general remarks on men and events, but by the manner of describing the one and recording the other, causing us to entertain the proper sentiments, whether of respect or interest, or of aversion or indifference, for the various subjects of the narrative. Consider for a moment what the perpetrators of the greatest crimes

that afflict humanity propose to themselves as their reward for overrunning other countries, and oppressing their own. It is the enjoyment of power, or of fame, or of both.

"He can requite thee, for he knows the charms
"That cull fame in such martial acts as these,
"And he can spread thy name on lands and seas,
"Whatever clime the sun's broad circle warms."

Unquestionably the renown of their deeds, their names being illustrious in their own day and living after them in future ages, is, if not the uppermost thought, yet one that fills a large place in their minds. Surely if they were well assured that every writer of genius, or even of such merit as secured his page from oblivion, and every teacher of youth would honestly hold up to hatred and contempt acts of injustice, cruelty, treachery, whatever talents they might display, whatever success they might achieve, and that the opinions and the feelings of the world would join in thus detesting and thus scorning, it is not romantic to indulge a hope that some practical discouragement might be given to the worst enemies of our species. That in this as in everything else there is action and reaction cannot be doubted. The existence of the popular feeling in its strength beguiles the historian, and, instead of endeavouring to reclaim, he panders to it. Sounder and better sentiments might gradually be diffused, and the bulk of mankind be weaned from this fatal error, of which the heavy price is paid by themselves in the end.

GRAPHIC ESTIMATE OF THE FIRST NAPOLEON'S CAREER.

What but the proneness of man to succumb under great genius, wickedly used, can be urged in extenuation of Napoleon's usurpation, by which he made France pay for her delivery from the anarchy and bloodshed of the Republic by the utter loss of her freedom, and in extenuation of his dreadful wars, waged to gratify an almost insane ambition at the cost of the people's misery, and the massacre and pillage of their neighbours? From the height to which his crimes had raised him of all but Emperor of the West, and from the eminence, so dearly purchased by the French, of having dictated terms to all the Sovereigns in their own capitals, he and they were hurled. Twice they had the bitter mortification of receiving the law in their own capital from those whom they had once trampled upon; and his fate and their humiliation were the work of headstrong passions blinding his reason after extinguishing his human feelings. The latest and the best historian of his reign (Mr. Thiers), though filled with admiration of his genius, and, as if natural to human weakness, leaning towards the hero of his tale, has been compelled to account for his downfall by six capital errors committed through a lust of dominion which no conquest could satiate, and through the caprices which sooner or later are sure to spring up in the soil of despotic power uncontrolled. Of these six errors any one would have sufficed to shake, almost to subvert, his power; and every one of them had caused the destruction of thousands, the wretchedness of millions. It would only be by a perversion of all right feelings that the spectacle of his fate could excite our pity, or that we could regard his expulsion from France amid the execrations of the people whom he had plunged into slavery, misery, and discomfiture, his attempt at self-destruction, his wretched end, a solitary prisoner in a remote island, as other than the just retribution by unexampled suffering for unexampled crimes; by the pride which had for self-indulgence humbled all others being laid prostrate in its turn; by that wretchedness falling at length on himself which whensoever he had a purpose to serve he had never hesitated to make others undergo. Let it be remembered that in every war which he waged, from his assumption of supreme power, until his banishment to Elba, he was the aggressor; that each one was undertaken for his personal aggrandisement, with a thin disguise of national glory—the glory of France, of which he was not a native—and we have the measure of his guilt. The death of Enghien, the sufferings of Wright, the punishment of Palm (all proceeding from the excess of cruelty which fear is so apt to engender in a violent temper), and the tortures of Toussaint, are often dwelt upon because the fortunes of individuals, presenting a more definite object to the mind, strike our imagination and rouse our feelings more than wretchedness in larger masses less distinctly perceived. The outrage upon religion by his declaring himself a Mahometan to further his views in Egypt, and the equal outrage upon morality by the mingled force and fraud in his circumvention of the Spanish princes, have in like manner been singled out as peculiar subjects of reproach. But to the eye of calm reflection the undertaking and unjustifiable war for a selfish purpose, or the persisting a day longer than is necessary in a contest which was begun on right grounds, presents a more grievous object of contemplation, implies a disposition more pernicious to the world, and is fitted to call down a reprobation far more severe. Take even the worst of rulers, those whose cruelty and profligacy are the detestation of all mankind, our own Richard III. and the Borgias. The former is believed upon light evidence to have committed many crimes besides those of which there can be no doubt, while just praise is not given to his capacity,