

CHATS WITH YOUNG MEN

SELF-IMPROVEMENT THROUGH PUBLIC SPEAKING

It does not matter whether one wants to be a public speaker or not, a person should have such complete control of himself, should be so self-reliant and self-poised that he can get up in any audience, no matter how large or formidable, and express his thoughts clearly and distinctly.

In all ages oratory has been regarded as the highest expression of human achievement. Young people, no matter what they intend to do, whether blacksmith or farmer, merchant or physician, should make it a study.

Nothing else will count out what is in a man more quickly and more effectively than the constant effort to do his best in speaking before an audience. When one undertakes to think on one's feet and speak extemporaneously before the public, the power and the skill of the entire man are put to the severest test.

A writer has the advantage of being able to wait for his moods. He can write when he feels like it; and he knows that he can put his manuscript away and try it again if it does not suit him. There are not a thousand eyes upon him. He does not have a great audience criticizing every sentence, weighing every word, and every listless word.

The occasions for after-dinner speaking are increasing enormously. A great many questions which used to be disposed of in the office are now discussed at dinner. At dinners, never before was there any such demand for dinner oratory as to-day.

We know men who have, by dint of hard work and persistent grit, lifted themselves into positions of prominence, and yet they are not able to stand on their feet in public, even to make a few remarks, or put a motion, without trembling like an aspen leaf. They had plenty of chances when they were young at school, in debating clubs, to get rid of their self-consciousness and to acquire ease and facility in public speaking, but they always shrink from every opportunity.

There are plenty of business men to-day who would give a great deal of money if they could only go back and improve the early opportunities for learning to think and speak on their feet which they threw away. Now they have money, position, but they are nobody when called upon to speak in public. All they can do is to look foolish, blush, stammer out an apology and sit down.

Some time ago I was at a public meeting when a man who stands very high in the community, who has the respect and confidence of every one who knows him, who is king in his speciality, was called upon to give his opinion upon an important public matter on which he was well posted. He got up and trembled and stammered and was so confused, so embarrassed, and "stage struck" that he could say scarcely anything. He had power and a great deal of experience, but he stood there as helpless as a child, and felt cheap, mortified, and embarrassed. Probably he would have given anything if he had early in life trained himself to think on

his feet and say with power and effectiveness what he knows. At the same meeting, a shallow-brained business man in the same city, who hadn't a hundredth part of the other man's practical power, got up and made an effective speech. Strangers no doubt thought that he was much the stronger man, simply because he had cultivated the ability to say his best thing on his feet, and the other man had not.

The effort to express one's ideas in lucid, clear-cut, concise telling English tends to make one's every-day language choicer and more direct, and improves one's diction generally. In this and other ways speech-making develops mental power and character. This explains the rapidity with which a young man often develops in school or college when he begins to take part in public debates or in debating societies.

In speaking before an audience, one must think quickly, vigorously, effectively. At the same time one must speak through a well modulated voice, with proper facial and bodily expression and gesture.

Nothing will tire an audience more quickly than to hear anything expressed in the same monotonous tone. It is a great art to be able to raise and lower the voice with sweet, flowing cadences which please the ear.

It was said of a certain Duke of Devonshire that he was the only English statesman who ever took a nap during the progress of his own speech. He was a perfect genius for dry, uninteresting oratory, moving forward with a monotonous drone, and pausing now and then as if refreshing himself by slumber.

In youth the would-be orator must cultivate robust health, since force, enthusiasm, conviction, will power are greatly affected by physical condition, and he, too, must cultivate bodily posture and have good habits at easy command. What would have been the result of Webster's reply to Hayne, the greatest oratorical effort ever made on the floor of the United States Senate and put his feet on the desk? Think of a great singer attempting to electrify an audience while lounging on a sofa or sitting in a slovenly position!

An early training for effective speaking will make one careful to secure a good vocabulary by good reading and a dictionary. One must know words. There is no class of people put to such a severe test to show what is in them as public speakers; no other men who run such a risk of exposing their weak spots, or making fools of themselves in the estimation of others. Public speaking—thinking on one's feet—is a powerful educator except to the thick-skinned man, the man who has no sensitiveness, or who does not care for what others think of him. Nothing else so thoroughly discloses a man's weaknesses or shows up his limitations of thought, his poverty of speech, his narrow vocabulary. Nothing else is such a touchstone of the character of one's resources and the extent of one's reading, the carefulness or carelessness of one's observation.

Close, compact statements are imperative to effectiveness. Learn to stop when you get through. Do not keep stringing out conversation or argument after you have made your point. You will not neutralize the good impression you have made, weaken your case and prejudice other people against you for your lack of tact, good judgment, or sense of proportion.

The debating club is the nursery of orators. No matter how far you have to go to attend it or how much trouble it is, or how difficult it is to get the time, the drill you will get by it is often the turning point. Lincoln, Wilson, Webster, Choate, Clay and Patrick Henry got their training in the old-fashioned Debating Society.

Every time you rise to your feet will increase your confidence, and after a while you will find the habit of speaking until it will be as easy as saying "hello."

THE FRIENDLY GIRL The girl who makes friends wherever she goes is delightful. She comes into a room like a sea-breeze—fresh, laughing, nothing right and left with happy impartiality. She is ready for anything, and never throws cold water on your plans. She generally sees the funny side of things, and has such a wholesome way of describing them that you feel as if you had seen them yourself.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS FLOWERS AND SAINTS There is scarcely a flower that grows that is not hallowed by appropriation to some saint. The yellow crocus is sacred to St. Valentine, the double daisy to St. Margaret of Hungary, the yellow star of Bethlehem to St. Joseph, primrose to St. Agatha, the marigold the rhododendron, St. Bartholomew, the carnation, cowslip to St. Catherine of Siena, the yellow rattle and yellow clover to St. Peter and Paul.

NO PLACE FOR WEDDINGS TWO JUSTICES REFUSE TO PERFORM MARRIAGE CEREMONY IN COURT Judge John Gibbons, of the Circuit Court of Chicago, has announced that he never again will perform a marriage ceremony. "I have two reasons," said the aged jurist, "One is that marriage belongs to the Church. Marriages performed outside the sanctuary of church walls furnish 75 per cent. of our divorces."

THE FIRST WRITING PEN The reed, which was the first pen in use, was a sort of bulrush growing in the marshes of the Nile. Reeds were cut in the manner of a quill and are still used in lands where the people write the Arabic characters.

BANQUET RELIGION Under the above suggestive caption a New York contemporary regaled its readers with this sumptuous editorial: "Under the title 'Men-and-Religion Forward Movement' a new effort toward religious unity and political purity has been started on its career. It was launched and announced at a banquet at the Hotel Astor and eight hundred prominent citizens were present to share in the feast and endorse the programme."

ENGLAND'S EMPTY CHURCHES It has been estimated that of the one hundred and twenty thousand men, women and children who cross the bridge that spans the River Thames at Richmond, on Sunday, less than 5 per cent. of them are on their way to church. The remainder seek rest and recreation in the parks, on the river, and in the country. It is asserted that since women suffrage became rampant in London the Protestant churches have lost their hold on the women of the community. One of the reasons assigned for the poor attendance at church on Sunday is the want of "Sunday clothes."

When The Cow Has Done Her Part OF COURSE it's important that the cow do her part. But after that, it's up to your cream separator. If it doesn't get highest quality cream, it doesn't skim it to a trace—you are robbing yourself of the profit that your cows have produced.

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Ladies of Sacred Heart at Vancouver The Ladies of the Sacred Heart, who recently were established at Vancouver, have purchased a magnificent site for their new convent on the Heights in Point Gray district adjacent to the grounds of the State University. To the obvious advantages of this situation, there are added sea-air and a view unsurpassed in variety and extent.

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