

rance. I would say to thousands of our countrymen who will have the opportunity—Hear him; hear Mr. Gough if you would avoid the unavailing regrets of some who have let slip the chance. Hear him once and judge for yourselves.”

A very enthusiastic meeting was held in Bristol on Tuesday, August 9th, to listen to Mr. J. B. Gough. Although various charges for admission were made, there could not have been fewer than 2,000 persons present, comprising a large number who may be said to represent the intelligence and respectability of the city. Mr. T. Hudson opened the proceedings by giving out a temperance hymn, which the audience sang with great fervour and feeling. Mr. B. D. Collins, thirty-eight years an abstainer, was called to the chair, and dwelt briefly on the signs of the times, as indicative of progression.

Mr. Gough, on rising, was received with great applause. His oration, for cogent argument, pathos, apposite illustration, wit, humour, and dramatic effect, has rarely been equalled. His *debut* here was most triumphant. The people on all hands are demanding a second visit.

On Wednesday, the 10th, Mr. Gough arrived at Merthyr, and was met at the Taff Vale Terminus by a large body of the Temperance reformers. The town was full of animation as the procession passed through the streets, for expectation had been raised to great altitude. Mr. and Mrs. Gough were accompanied in the same carriage by Mr. Thomas Hudson, of Bristol, and Mr. Richard Corry, of Cardiff. The Temperance Hall, which is a spacious one, being deemed too small for the occasion, the large meeting-house, known by the name of Zion Chapel, was placed at the service of the committee. The meeting was one of the most numerously attended and influential ever known in this locality. There were present the leading ministers, medical men, and tradesmen of the town. By almost general consent the shops were closed at seven instead of eight o'clock—thus affording all classes the opportunity of hearing Mr. Gough. Mr. Thomas Hudson, of Bristol, was elected to the chair. After the singing of an appropriate hymn, and a brief and forcible speech from the Chairman, Mr. Gough presented himself, and was greeted with enthusiasm. For more than an hour and a half he dilated on the multifarious evils of intemperance, viewing the vice of drunkenness as it affects the social position, domestic happiness, and eternal destinies of man. The audience were delighted, finding their highest expectations more than realised.

### Critical Estimate of Mr. Gough's Oratory.

Several eminent men have essayed to analyze and criticise the talent possessed by Mr. Gough. The criticism from the *British Banner*, given in the *Witness* of August 24th, is decidedly good, but not equal to the following, which is given by an eye and ear witness who attended in Exeter-Hall. After a description of the place, and the burst of applause with which the orator was greeted, the writer thus proceeds:—

Well, popular enthusiasm has toned down—the audience has recanted itself—a song of welcome has been sung, and there stands up a man of middle size and middle age. Lord Bacon deemed him

self ancient when he was thirty-one—we moderns in our excessive self-love, delude each other into the belief that we are middle-aged when we are anywhere between forty and sixty. In reality, a middle-aged man should be somewhere about thirty-five, and such we take to be Mr. Gough's age. He is dressed in sober black—his hair is dark and so is his face; but there is a muscular vigour in his frame, for which we were not prepared. We should judge Gough has a large share of the true *elixir vite*—animal spirits. His voice is one of great power and pathos, and he speaks without an effort. The first sentence as it falls gently and easily from his lips tells us that Gough has that true oratorical power which neither money nor industry, nor persevering study, can ever win. Like the poet, the orator must be born. You may take a man six feet high—he shall be good looking—have a good voice, and speak English with a correct pronunciation—you shall write for that man a splendid speech—you shall have taught elocution by Mr. Webster, and yet you shall no more make that man an orator than, to use a homely phrase, you can make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. Gough is an orator born, Pope tells us he “lisp'd in numbers,” and in his boyhood Gough must have had the true tones of the orator on his tongue. There was no effort—no fluster—all was easy and natural. He was speaking, for the first time, to a public meeting in his native land—speaking to thousands who had come with the highest expectations—who expected much and required much—speaking, by means of the press, to the whole British public. Under such circumstances, occasional nervousness would have been pardonable; but, from the first, Gough was perfectly self-possessed. There are some men who have prodigious advantages on account of appearance alone. We think it was Fox who said it was impossible for any one to be as wise as Thurlow looked. The great Lord Chatham was particularly favoured by nature in this respect. In our own time—in the case of Lord Denman—we have seen how much can be done by means of a portly presence and a stately air. Gough has nothing of this. He is just as plain a personage as George Dawson, of Birmingham, would be, if he were to cut his hair and shave off his moustache; but, though we have named George Dawson, Gough does not speak like him, or any other living man. Gough is no servile copy, but a real original. We have no one in England we can compare him to. Our popular lecturers, such as George Dawson, Henry Vincent, George Thompson, are very different men. They have all a studied quaintness or a studied rhetoric. There is something artificial about them all. In Gough there is nothing of this. He seems to speak by inspiration. As the Apostles spoke who were commanded not to think beforehand what they should say—the spoken word seems to come naturally, as air-bubbles up from the bottom of the well. In what he said there was nothing new—there could be nothing new—the tale he told was old as the hills, yet, as he spoke an immense audience grew hushed and still, and hearts were melted, and tears glistened in female eyes, and that great human mass became knit together by a common spell. Disraeli says, Sir Robert Peel played upon the House of Commons as an old fiddle; Gough did the same at Exeter Hall. At his bidding, stern, strong men, as well as sensitive women, wept or laughed—they swelled with indignation or desire. Of the various chords of human passion, he was master. At times he became roused, and we thought how

—“in his ire Olympian Pericles  
Thundered and lightened, and all Hellas shook.”

At other times in his delineation of American manners, he proved himself almost an equal to Silsbee. Off the stage we have nowhere seen a better mimic than Gough, and this must give him great power, especially in circles where the stage is as much a *terra incognita*, as Utopia, or the Island of Laputa itself. We have always thought that a fine figure of Byron where he tells us that he laid his hand upon the ocean's mane. Something of the same kind might be said to be applicable to Mr. Gough. He seemed to ride upon the audience—to have mastered it completely to his will. He seemed to bestride it as we could imagine Alexander bestriding his Bucephalus.

Gough spoke for nearly two hours. Evidently the audience could have listened, had he gone on, till midnight. We often hear that the age of oratory has gone by—that the press supersedes the tongue—that the appeal must henceforth be made to the reader in his study, not the hearer in the crowded hall. There is much truth in that. Nevertheless the true orator will always please his audience, and true oratory will never die. The world