

decision of his own intellect, taken captive by the personal powers of the speaker. To learn what the oration really contains, and what force it has as a pure expression of human thought, it must be read and weighed by the mind of the auditor when in a cool and critical state. Under such conditions the verdict is often changed and the weakness and emptiness of what may have seemed irrefutable arguments are exposed. For this reason it may be held that no one should decide as to the true merit of an oration until he has read it, and the really great orations can be enjoyed by the reader centuries even after they were delivered.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS WORK

In the present work an effort has been made to do justice to the orator, as far as possible, from both points of view. While carefully chosen selections from notable speeches have been made, in evidence of the quality of thought and mode of expression of each person dealt with, there has also been an endeavor to give a living impression of his personality. For this purpose a detailed portrait gallery of orators has been presented to the reader, that he may see them "in their habit as they lived"; the special occasion which gave rise to each oration is cited; and a sketch is given in the instance of each orator of the qualities and circumstances to which he owes his fame and his characteristics as a man. It is hoped in this way to give a degree of vital personality to each of the several persons dealt with, and as fully as possible to put them on the stage before the reader; enabling the latter, while enjoying the eloquence of each member of our galaxy of orators, at the same time, in some measure, to behold him in person, to catch him, as it were, in the act of delivery.

Aside from the endeavor here indicated, it is the purpose of the editor of this work to offer examples of oratory selected from the choicest orations on record in every field; chosen alike from the stars of the first magnitude in this art and those