

recognize through these the manifest beauties of the oration.

A true orator must have some great message to deliver to the people. He must have a good reputation and be of real personal merit. He must have sympathy and vividness in the most marked degree; and last, but by no means least, he must have a fervor that will at once attract the audience and sustain their interest throughout. Let us then, on this plan, examine Burke's oration against Warren Hastings.

What was this great truth, that Burke must needs proclaim? It was the tale of an oppressed people, of an outraged authority, of the most glaring acts of cruelty and crime—deeds which his own pure soul could not look at without a shudder—deeds whose only justification to us lies in the thought that had they not been committed, India to-day would not have been a part of the British Empire—deeds which are morally unpardonable, though they may be politically condoned.

A real orator must be upright and of good repute. Burke was entirely unknown to the political world until the age of thirty-five. Then entering parliament as a member for the first time, he at once showed by the vast sweep of his mighty mind, by the concise yet vivid march of his unconstrained imagination, that a new light had appeared, whose dimmest gleam would outshine the brightest of his compeers. He was learned in the sciences, in history, in law, in philosophy, and so thoroughly their master that he has been compared to Bacon. He is the man whom the hired creature of Hastings designated "that reptile Mr. Burke," and yet the same that the great Dr. Johnson called "the first man in England."

Burke's intellect was wide, ranging, comprehensive—his conception fertile yet precise, bringing before his mind thousands of thronging images, of the most beautiful forms and clothed in the most fantastic garments. He was an enthusiast. He fought for noble causes, against unrighteous oppression, for public morality. His understanding was pre-eminently fitted for investigating truth, and his body acted merely as the servant of his untameable sensibilities. He formed his opinions with all the impetuosity of a madman, and then defended them with all the coolness of a philosopher.

This was the man who stood before the bar of

Westminster, on the thirteenth of February, 1788, to plead the cause of a nation separated from himself by half the world, and to contend that the crimes of an Englishman abroad should receive the same sentence as those of an Englishman at home. He stood to impeach not Hastings alone, but every like case down through the centuries. He stood in a hall, hallowed by the strangest and most sacred associations—a hall which had witnessed the coronations of thirty kings—a hall where the murdered Charles had received his unjust sentence. He stood before all the pomp and pride of England—the judges wigged and gowned, the lords in ermine and cloth of gold, the holders of the highest offices of Church and State. He stood in the presence of royalty itself. Overhead, in the long, crowded galleries, was an audience appreciative and lovely—men, whose great minds were afterwards to enrich the whole nation—women, whose hearts and souls went out in sympathy for the cause of justice.

Burke's part was a play of masterly exposition, of stately eloquence, of living pictures. He transforms what had been to others only musty records, into flashing portraits, glowing with life and colour. He does not pick out one from a thousand thoughts. He rather tries to force them all into one mass, and first deafening the hearer by the vigour of his rhetoric, stuns him by its rapidity and continuance. Perhaps the best way to criticise this oration is to judge by its effects. What kind of an oration can we call that, where the women wept and sobbed, where those of too sympathizing minds even swooned away, where Hastings himself declared that "for half an hour he felt the most culpable of men"?

Burke saw and felt that Hastings had committed acts unjustifiable by the laws of his country. His noble feelings and natural sympathies, of themselves, directed him to impeach Hastings, perhaps, indeed, they hurried him too far. His great mind became a mere vehicle for his passions. In all Hastings's career he could see no redeeming features, no mitigating circumstances. People have even charged him with wishing to revenge some private grievance, but it is only by looking at the depth of his passions, and at the elevation of his mind, that we can even pretend to understand his actions.

Sympathy and vividness are two other essential qualities of the true orator. Burke possessed these, also, in a marked degree. He could describe India