

the *sound* of the words is strikingly in unison with the idea to be expressed.

Lord Brougham says, "Our greatest orators have excelled by a careful attention to rhythm, some of the finest passages of modern eloquence owe their unparalleled success, undeniably to the adoption of those Iambic measures which thrilled and delighted the Roman forum, and the Dactylus and Pæonicus, which were the luxury of the Attic Ecclesia. Witness the former, he adds, in Mr. Erskine's celebrated passage respecting the Indian chief, and the latter in Mr. Grattan's peroration to his speech on Irish Independence."

We cannot do better than look at the practice of the ancients in regard to the rhetorical art, in which their remarkable distinction was the natural consequence of extraordinary care and pains. The masters taught that whatever might be the qualities of the intellect and the gifts of nature, these advantages were of no avail if they were not aided by stubborn labor and by persistent exercises in reading, writing, and speaking. Cicero advised never to speak with negligence, and to give conversation the degree of completeness suitable to the subject; but the best method, in the opinion of the teachers, was to write much. "Write," said Cicero, "and in this way you will the better learn to speak." "The pen," he says elsewhere, "is the best master to teach the art of practical speech." Quintilian, the most judicious of counsellors, advised writing, even though the manuscript was laid aside, in speaking. "We must write," he said, "with much care and very often; without which the gift of improvisation or extemporary speaking will be a vain flow of words."

It is interesting to notice that the ancient orators had a great dislike to extemporary speaking. Cicero, even in the busiest period of his life, wrote the most important part of his pleadings. Augustus committed his speeches to memory. Pliny the younger, who was full of intelligence and grace, only extemporized when compelled by necessity, and said that there was only one way of arriving at good speaking—reading much, writing much, and speaking much.

Another fact which proves the highly artificial and laborious nature of ancient oratory, was the preparation of proemia or introductions of speeches never delivered. Of these proemia many are preserved. It would seem that these introductions were kept for use to meet a demand that might suddenly be made upon a speaker, and for this purpose were held in the memory. Fifty-six of these, written by Demosthenes, have reached us. The elaboration of their compositions by the ancients was most remarkable. Plato, under whom Demosthenes is supposed to have studied, was noted for the care which he took of his diction. Cicero affirmed that Plato wrote by a kind of divine faculty, and it was commonly said that if the Father of the Gods had spoken in Greek, he would have used no other language than Plato's. The first of ancient critics said of his diction that it resembled a piece of sculpture or chasing rather than written composition. He continued to polish it till extreme old age; and a remarkable instance is given of a note-book he kept, in which he had written the first words of his Treatise on Government several times over in different arrangements.

Another notable characteristic of the ancient orators was the respect in which they held their audiences, as possessing a true discernment of oratorical excellence. The anecdote is related of Demosthenes, that when Pytheas taunted him with his speeches smelling of the lamp, his answer was, "True, but your lamp and mine do not give their perfume to the same labors." Cicero remarks himself, that it is astonishing that though there is the greatest difference between the educated and the uneducated man in action, there is not much in their judgments. On this Lord Brougham says: "The best speakers of all times have never failed to find that they could not speak too well and too carefully to a popular assembly; that if they spoke their best, the best they could address to the most learned and critical assembly, they were sure to succeed."

"If," says Henry Rogers, in his charming *Greyson Letters*, "If you would produce any lively or durable impression on any audience (rustic or polished matters not), you must