

accomplish? Our faith in the life that lies beyond earth's narrow span finds confirmation from the very insignificance of man's highest achievements here compared with his capacities and aspirations. Yet here is your present field of action, in which you are called to play your part manfully; ever keeping before you that higher life, of which this is but the probationary stage. Let it be vital with deeds, and not with boastful words. Science has come to your aid with appliances undreamt of till now; philosophy turns aside from abstract speculation to solve the vexed problems of social and political life. With advantages rarely, if ever, equalled, you enter on the inheritance of a virgin soil with all the grand possibilities of a new era. But the willing hand of the industrious toiler will need the help of the keen intellect and the no less busy brain; if we would not be mere gleaners, loitering in the rear of a progressive age; "reaping where we have not sown; and gathering where we have not strawed."

Elocutionary Department

STUDIES ON ELOCUTION.

SCENE FROM KING JOHN, FOURTH READER, P. 306.

BY R. LEWIS.

THE two important characters in this selection are: Hubert, the Burgher Chamberlain and Prince Arthur, the right heir to the throne which John had usurped, and now a prisoner in the charge of Hubert. In a previous scene John had tempted Hubert to undertake the murder of Arthur, whom John had described as "a very serpent in his way" to the full possession of the throne. In this scene Hubert has the warrant of the king to commit another crime—common in that age of darkness and cruelty—to burn out the eyes of his innocent prisoner, before committing the greater crime. Hubert but "acts in blind obedience to a course of habit." Throughout this play—or as it should be called tragedy—Hubert displays as noble and chivalrous a character as the best around him. His highest offence is his fidelity to a cruel, cowardly and worthless ruler; and that fidelity was prompted and sanctioned by the feudal habit and law of loyalty and obedience of the subject to his sovereign. In the scene before us, when preparing to burn out the eyes of Arthur, "the sight and supplications for mercy and the tears of the innocent child, awaken in him his slumbering, better nature." Arthur is childlike and incapable of believing in the possibility of the threatened cruelty to be inflicted by one whom he loves and trusts; "a saintly creature, angelic, untried and uninjured,"* but, as a prisoner sighing for the freedom of lowly life, and, while in terror of his uncle's deadly hatred, he fears no danger from his keeper, Hubert.

These are the conflicting characteristics that must guide us in reading, with true impersonation, this splendid but pathetic scene. The sternness of Hubert, unnatural to him and exaggerated by the effort to subdue or conceal his better feelings, and sustain his character as jailor and executioner; and, on the other hand, the tenderness and loving sympathy of Arthur with the only friend he has, and the terror with which he is filled when he reads the warrant to burn out his eyes, rising to its height of anguish, when he sees the attendants approach with the instruments of torture in their hands, expressed in the thrillingly touching appeal:

"O save me, Hubert, save me! my eyes are out
Even with the fierce looks of these bloody men,"—
these varied feelings and appeals demand the strongest conceptions of the imagination in the reader to realize the picture by oral reading.

The reader, however, must beware lest he overdo each part as he impersonates it. Hubert's sternness is pervaded and softened by compunctions of

conscience, and by the natural pity which makes the "foolish rheum turn despiteous torture out of door!" while Arthur displays heroic manliness, even in his childlike appeals for mercy. His training has been that of a prince of the stern feudal age, and his intelligence and language are advanced beyond his years.

Further, in this preparation to read the scene it is of little importance to the reader that he should realize the material scenery and objects supposed to be in the room, as necessary to a full conception. It is not known where the scene occurred or where Arthur was imprisoned. It adds nothing to the conception to make a mental picture of the walls, or the arras, the tapestry hung over the walls, or the general surroundings of the room in the castle. Such preparatory conceptions will rather tend to weaken the grander conceptions to be formed of the two leading characters.

Finally, the reader must not attempt to be the actor. When the play is represented in the theatre the scenery and costumes are historical pictures of the times, and each actor represents one character only. But the reader represents not costumes and scenery but simply persons which, notwithstanding, form the essential part of the play. Neither is the reader called upon to exercise gesticulation. If in this scene he performed all the gesticulation he would have to walk from one side to the other, he would have to bring on "the cords, irons, etc." The reader remains in one place and his gesticulation must be exercised with economy, graceful and appropriate, never violent and extravagant, and, as a rule, rare. It is in every respect best for the reader that he should have no gesticulation rather than much of it. Finally, in this preparation it should be a rule with readers as with actors not to look at their audiences. In reading, this is excusable if the reader is narrating an event to the audience. But when dialogue is introduced and represented, if the reader, as Hubert, for example, is speaking to the attendants or to Arthur, he should turn his face slightly but not his person to one side; but the instant he reads the words of Arthur he should turn slightly in the opposite direction, and do this systematically and uniformly, not fixing Arthur or Hubert sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other.

THE SCENE.—The references are to the pages 306, etc., and lines in the Fourth Reader.

The instructions are given to the attendants with calmness and dignity, but with a slight expression of anger in the reply to the objection made by the first attendant.

L. 8, H. changes his expression. It is the expression of a noble nature struggling with the promptings of an evil deed which he is ashamed to name and shrinks from committing, stern respect with softer utterance than to the attendants.

P. 307, A. The salutation is gentle and trustful. There is yet no suspicion in A.'s mind of the intended torture. The reply of H. is still marked with the hesitancy of guilt, and spoken in low pitch and slowly.

With reference to the vocal imitation it should be understood that no such imitation should be forced and unnatural. If a man represents the two characters, his voice as H. should be natural, about the middle pitch of his own voice; but when he passes to A.'s speeches the voice should be softer in quality, higher a note or two in pitch, but in no respect attempting to pass into the pitch of a child or young boy's voice. The same rule holds for a lady. As Hubert, she uses the deeper and sterner tones of her natural voice, but in no respect must she attempt to imitate a man's voice or pass into gruffness of tone.

A. answers mournfully and complainingly; emphasize "little," "more" and "sad."

H. answers with a sigh; (emphasize "merrier.")

"Indeed I have been merrier."

A. read "Mercy on me"; em. "nobody" and "I." The delivery of the speech throughout must be free from whining or childish tones. From "yet" to "wantonness" he speaks cheerfully with a touch of humor. Afterwards to the end of his speech he complains in a strong feeling of injustice, but childlike. In the last two lines we may conceive with what touching and tender earnestness he turns to Hubert:—

"I would to Heaven
I were your son, so you would love me Hubert."

In l. 6 of this speech, "sheep" takes em. as even sheep. Again in l. 10 read: "He is afraid of me, and I of him," as marked.

Read l. 11 with feeling and tremor.

The speech of H. is uttered in soft and low tones his head turned slightly away from A.

The question of A. is full of tender but childlike sympathy, and the simple rebuke in l. 4 will be best expressed as marked:

"I warrant I love you | more than you do me."

Hubert turns his head aside; he cannot look the innocent child, so justly complaining, in the face, and the speech he utters is spoken in low tones. L's 3, 4, are questions put to himself, and so read.

A.'s question is an earnest appeal, the voice trembling in the agitation of terror. Let the reader be careful not to emphasize "both," as if to burn out one eye would not trouble him. The question is, "Must you destroy my sight?"

P. 308, A. "And will you," should be read as marked, and in H.'s answer "Will," is emphatic with downward inflection.

The touching and beautiful appeal of A. that follows is a study demanding the most careful conception and expression; and the student must remember, notwithstanding "new systems" that are abroad, that the vocal expression is as much a study and a difficulty as the conception. The writer of these articles does not suppose that his marks and rules will supersede the necessity for the right conception, but he is equally certain that without special attention to the modulations of the voice, the conception will fail to be realized in speech.

A., "Have you the heart," etc. The pleading is intensely earnest and touching, simple and childlike, but not loud nor childish. The voice must not mar the appeal by imitation of crying tones, but be marked by such full force, without boisterousness, as the brave heart of a young boy, pleading for sight and very life to a generous nature would naturally inspire.

In reading from l. 1 to l. 12, A., excited by terror, speaks rapidly, laying great emphasis on the value "handkercher," "a princess wrought," possessed, and uttering the inquiries with tender emphasis. In l's 10 to 12 em. "poor" and "prince" (even a prince). In l's 13 to 16 the expression is one of despair and resignation. "Since you must be cruel, I must suffer." But in l. 16 the fear of torture and of death is re-awakened and the appeal strengthens in its terrible and bitter earnestness:

"Will you put out mine eyes?"

Those eyes | that never did nor never shall
So much as frown | on you."

The em. on the italicized words with the inflections indicates the expression of the voice.

The reply of H. to this passionate appeal is firm and stern, presenting as yet no signs of relenting.

But A. does not give up hope. His terror inspires eloquence which reaches a climax too powerful for H. to resist. He must yield unless the cruelty is at once executed. The first five lines of A.'s speech are beautiful in their imagery, but in no-wise unnatural in the feeling that things even without life would sympathize with the fears and tears of innocence. This passage must be spoken with passionate earnestness, especially expressed in the words "drink my tears" and "quench his fiery indignation" and "innocence." L's 6, 7, would be better omitted as the figure passes into hyperbolic extravagance. But the earnestness and beauty of the appeal are again renewed in the remaining lines, which are here given marked:

"And if an angel should have come to me,
And told me HUBERT | should put out mine eyes,
I would not have believed him. No tongue but
Hubert's."

"Hubert" and "eyes" take strong emphasis, and the three lines are to be read with that agitation and tremor which best express terror and anguish.

The remainder of the scene will appear in the next issue of this journal.

It has seemed to me that the highest range of human talent is distinguished, not by the power of doing well any one particular thing, but by that power of doing well anything which we resolutely determine to do.—Francis Wayland.

*Quotations from Gervinus.