

THE ART OF THE ORATOR

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The art of the orator by Edgar R. Jones

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EDGAR R. JONES

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BY

EDGAR R. JONES, M.P.

WITH A FOREWORD

BY

THE RIGHT HON. D. LLOYD GEORGE, M.P.



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

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FOREWORD

I ONCE heard Mr. Gladstone say, that in a conflict between the platform and the press for the direction of public opinion in this country, an efficient platform would surely win. Whether that be so or not, the influence of the spoken word must always be great in the government of all democratic communities, and in every sphere of activity, however exalted, it must continue to inspire men, and fashion their lives. Every aid to the efficient discharge of so important a function must be welcome. The experience and skill acquired by Mr. Edgar Jones in the practice of this great art gives value to a contribution from his pen on the subject. His original and ingenious treatment of it makes it well worth perusal by all those who wish to acquire proficiency in the art of public speaking.

D. LLOYD GEORGE.

PREFACE

It is with some apprehension that a public man ventures to publish a volume on oratory under his own name ; he obviously lays himself open to taunts and to accusations of presumption.

But it is not in the capacity of a practitioner that I have approached the subject. If there is anything due to experience in the book, it is an experience of failure and a poignant recollection of mistakes.

In my college days I combined a study of mental and moral science with that of pedagogy, and years ago it struck me as peculiar that there should be a whole library of textbooks that endeavoured to base ideal methods of teaching a class on the principles of mental activity found in the treatises on psychology ; whereas, so far as I knew, no similar scientific attempt had been made during recent years to

base the methods of addressing an audience on the laws of psychology.

The properly trained pedagogue starts from the question, "How does the child begin to acquire ideas?" Why should not the orator begin with the parallel question, "How does the mind of an adult acquire an idea?" As a humble student, wondering what the pursuit would yield, I took up some of my old pedagogic textbooks, and then settled down to a feeble imitation.

As the reader will observe, I borrowed the psychology from the standard textbooks, and mainly from those I was most acquainted with. I have quoted largely because there may be many readers who are not acquainted with, and may never become acquainted with, psychological treatises.

I have merely patched things together. It may be fairly readable for the ordinary reader, if he takes time and tries to pick up the technical terms as he goes along. For the expert it will serve as an indication of what may be done along these lines. It is only a first attempt; and if it may serve as a basis for lectures in some of our institutions, such as

theological colleges, and lead to a development similar to that in pedagogy, the volume will have served its purpose.

They are notes for reflection, illustration, and expansion. Later on, if leisure permits, I may fill out the outline with explanation and illustration.

Having used psychology for guidance as to procedure before the audience, I turned to logic for light as to preparation, and found some illuminative and helpful passages in Mill and a few other authors.

For those who had not, as boys have nowadays, systematic school instruction in the theory of composition, I have added the notes I used in my old lecturing days. The order taken, therefore, is found in three successive questions: (1) How can I move the audience in the direction I desire? (2) How should I prepare my matter when endeavouring to achieve that result? (3) How should I arrange my words, phrases, and sentences, in the exposition of that matter? I have blundered through the whole in a spirit of inquiry, and remain a timorous student on the threshold of a great subject.

One objection is sure to be raised—the hackneyed conservative objection that theory is of no use, because the orator is born such, or made such by practice. That applies to the theory underlying every art, and has no weight with anyone of consequence. The bearing of theory on practice is dealt with in the text.

The author's hope is that the theory underlying the art of the orator may soon receive much more attention than it has received up to the present.

EDGAR R. JONES.

March 25, 1912.