

**THE ESSENTIALS OF
EXTEMPORE
SPEAKING**

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The essentials of extempore speaking by Joseph A. Mosher

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THE ESSENTIALS OF EXTEMPORE SPEAKING

BY

JOSEPH A. MOSHER, PH. D.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SPEAKING, COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF
NEW YORK; SPECIAL LECTURER ON EXTEMPORE SPEAK-
ING, ADVERTISING CLUB OF NEW YORK, AND AUTHOR
OF "THE ESSENTIALS OF EFFECTIVE GESTURE."

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PREFACE

The following pages aim to embody in clear and concise form the essentials of practical, extempore speaking. No attempt is made to add to the bibliography of oratory, which is already adequate. This can hardly be said, however, of the bibliography of practical address. A few admirable books on this phase of public speaking have appeared within recent years, but much that is helpful in the way of new viewpoints and new methods of presentation remains to be written. To distinguish between the aim of the writer on oratory and the purpose of the present treatise, I quote from a book,* recently republished in this country, which represents the oratorical viewpoint:

“Once face to face, and at grappling point with his idea, he [the orator] will forget everything else. He will no longer see anything save the thought which he has to manifest, the feeling of his heart which he has to communicate. His voice, which just now was so tremulous and broken, will acquire assurance, authority, bril-

* “The Art of Extempore Speaking,” by Abbé Bautain.

liancy; if he is rightly inspired that day, if light from on high beams in his intelligence and warms his soul, his eyes will shoot lightning, and his voice the thunderbolt; his countenance will shine like the sun, and the weakness of humanity will undergo its transfiguration. He will stand on the Mount Tabor of eloquence."

The above represents a noble and inspiring conception of the speaker; to say anything further on that phase of the subject would, I am afraid, be in the nature of an anti-climax. But such a point of view is not calculated to minister to the requirements of the great body of students, teachers, lawyers, doctors, businessmen, and similar everyday people who will never have occasion to scale the heights of eloquence, but who often need to express their ideas clearly, forcefully, and attractively to their fellowmen. It is to such that the following pages are addressed.

The material used represents, in the main, a condensation and arrangement of the notes and criticisms which the writer has found most helpful to classes during ten years devoted chiefly to helping men—students, business and professional men—to develop their ability to speak effectively. One of the convictions which this experience has instilled is that in teaching public speaking it is easy to play a part in making "over-instruction the bane of modern education," as Professor A. M.

Hitchcock has trenchantly put it. Too many details, too much insistence on the delicate shades of effect, either in lectures or text-books, are apt to discourage and confuse the student. On the other hand, the subject may be presented in such a vague and sketchy way as to provide him with no substantial guiding principles and aids in the actual practice of speaking, which must, of course, constitute the backbone of his training. The writer has tried to avoid these extremes, and hopes that the result may be of service to those who are interested in practical, extempore address.

J. A. M.

New York City, June, 1917.