

October 22, 1852
Allen, W[illia]m G.
Frederick Douglass' Paper

/ORATORS AND ORATORY.

AN ADDRESS

BY

PROF. WM. G. ALLEN,

Before the Dialerian Society of New York

Central College, June 22, 1852.]

Gentlemen and Members of the Dialexiant—My subject is ORATORS AND ORATORY.

It is not only true, that “the mind is the only medal of honor—the only badge of distinction—the only measure of the man”—but it is also true, that he that thinks the largest thought is the ruler of the world. Such a ruler may not sit upon the throne, nor may he occupy the President’s chair, nor the Governor’s seat; nevertheless, he is the ruler of the world, and that by reason of his superior and God-given powers. Accustomed as the world now is, to regard shadows as substances, and shows as realities, it is unable to recognize its true rulers; but as it moves onward and upward to God—as the *merely* intellectual shall give place to the moral AND the intellectual, usurpers will be dethroned, rulers attain their proper places, and be known and read of all men.

Is Fillmore the *rightful* ruler of this nation? No more necessarily so than I would be a dentist, because all the people of McGrawville should get together and vote me such. That was a sagacious boy who would not admit that the calf’s tail *was* a leg, merely because it was *called* such. Solomon

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has written the following: "This wisdom have I seen under the sun, and it seemed great to me. There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now, there was found in it, a poor wise man, and he, by his wisdom, delivered the city; and yet no man remembered that same poor man." This is admirable, and to the point. If he be not the *rightful* ruler of a city, who, "by his wisdom," delivers it, then what claim hath Wisdom over Folly, Virtue over Vice, Power over Weakness? I repeat the idea, he is the ruler of a nation or the world, who is superior to his fellows in the capacity to rule—who thinks the largest thoughts, performs the greatest deeds, and takes good care that these thoughts, and these deeds, and the law of Rectitude shall be in perfect harmony.

Nothing is easier, as, indeed, nothing is more common, than to call both persons and things by improper names. Toussant figures less largely on the pages of history than Napoleon; and, yet, in every element of the *rightful* ruler, Toussant was the superior. If results are in any degree an exponent of character, they who judge righteous judgment, will judge this judgment true. I will not say that Napoleon was less intellectual than Toussant—I will not say that Toussant was as intellectual as Napo-

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leon; but I will say that he had a character more symmetrical by far, and an ambition more worthy of beings who were made to look upward.

After the thinker, the next in order is the orator. Indeed, the consummate orator is thinker, speaker, and righteous man combined. The world has seen but few such; but wherever, and whenever seen, they have represented the "highest style of man"—the most perfect specimens of intellectual and moral grandeur.

The art of oratory is consequent upon introduction of sin. Had there been no disturbing force, all men would be poets. Do you ask why? Because poetry is the natural language of the sinless heart. The Bible is the most poetic of books, because most conformable to nature. The Hebrew language is the most poetic of languages, because spoken before sin had been wrought into a science. Even the sounds of this language are prayerful and poetic.

Had there been no disturbing force, all would have been harmony;—and what need, therefore, would there have been of logic, since there would have been nothing to correct? What need of rhetoric, since no art of persuasion would have been necessary to impress men with either the beauty or the holiness of virtue? Our outward world is an expression of our interior life. Not the Psalmist alone, therefore, but all men would

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have exclaimed, and the exclamation would have been spontaneous,

"The Heavens declare the glory of God.
And the firmament sheweth his handy work:
Day unto day uttereth speech,
And night unto night sheweth knowledge."

The whole universe would have been to all mankind a paradise, and creation, holy ground. Had there been disturbing force, there would have been thought, but no reflection; no casting of the mind backward, but ever forward, onward and upward.

"The meanest flower that blows
Can give *thoughts*, that do often lie too deep for tears."

Since, then, the art of oratory is consequent upon the introduction of sin; and since the sin of sins is the oppression of the weak by the strong, it follows that no other subject can beget the highest efforts of oratory than that of personal or political liberty. Liberty is the first condition of human progress. Whoso does not admit this, is irredeemably dull of comprehension. It follows, also, that orators worthy the name, must originate in the nation which is a transition state, either from slavery to Freedom, or freedom to slavery. I was about to say, that orators worthy the name, must originate among the oppressed races, but on turning to the pages of history, I was reminded of the fact, that all races, with scarcely an exception, had, at some period of their existence, been in a state of thraldom. In the veins of English and Americans; the freest of

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men—flows the blood of slaves. At the Norman Conquest, and close of the Saxon Hep-tatchy, two-thirds of the population of England was held in different degrees of servitude. One person in every seven was an absolute slave, and a marketable commodity, in every sense of the word. Slaves and cattle were legal tender; and the law was, that one slave should be held in value as equivalent to four oxen. A little consolation is better than none; so I would say to the black man, therefore—*Take courage, friend, you are only taking your turn.*

But to return and repeat. Orations worthy the name must have for their subject personal or political liberty; and orators worthy the name must necessarily originate in the nation which is on the eve of passing from a state of slavery into freedom, or from a state of freedom into slavery. How could this be otherwise? Where there is no pressure, the highest efforts of genius must lie undeveloped.

The celebrated Demosthenes arose at a period when Athens was passing into a state of thraldom under Philip. Cicero, when Rome was in a transition state from a Commonwealth to an Empire. Patrick Henry, when the colonies were passing from the darkness of British tyranny into the light of American freedom. And certainly none need be told, when Ireland produced her O'Connell, the dark-skinned American his Douglass, the Hungarian his Kossuth.

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I proceed now to illustrate. The most distinguished of ancient orators are Demosthenes and Cicero. Julius Caesar, too, was one of Rome's greatest orators; and had he given his attention exclusively to the art, would doubtless have surpassed him whose name sheds so much lustre on Roman history. Caesar was a man of wonderful genius. Romans thought him a God; and, I was about to say—well they might; for judged in the light of mind, as comprehensive as flexible, as flexible as comprehensive, and as intense as both—Rome never produced his equal.

Of the personal history of Demosthenes and Cicero, I have not time to speak, nor is it important to consider it in such a lecture as this. All know something more or less of the early life of Demosthenes—how he was hissed off the stage because of his ungainly appearance, and indistinct articulation—how he shaved his head that he might not go abroad—how he hung a sword before his mirror, that, at last, to correct his enunciation, he practised with pebbles in his mouth, and, to accustom himself to the clamor of the multitude, declaimed upon the sea-shore taking for his audience the roaring and dashing of the billows—how, in short, he gave himself to the intenses application in the art in which he was determined to excel. All know, also, who know anything of his history, what the result was of such perse-

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Cicero, also, in early life, labored under disadvantages not a few; but, being less formidable than those of Demosthenes, they were, of course, more easily overcome.

Demosthenes' most celebrated oration is his "Oration De Corona." It was delivered about 329 B.C.; and in connexion with Ctesiphon, with whom the great orator was an associate. The indictment was moved by AEschines—a man of great power, and especially remarkable for his personal and political hatred of Demosthenes. Ctesiphon had proposed that Demosthenes be crowned for his services to the State. The ceremony was to be performed in the Theatre of Bacchus, during the festival held in honor of that god, and the crown, as usual, to be a chaplet of olive, interwoven with gold. AEschines opposed the measure. He had great powers of oratory; and in addition thereto, the weight and influence of character which attached themselves to the leader of a powerful Grecian faction. But, with all these, he was unable to stand the fire of Demosthenes. The result is known. He was overwhelmed with disgrace, and compelled to submit to exile.

The plan of this masterpiece of Demosthenes, as given synoptically by Champlin, is as follows:—

1. Exordium
2. Refutation of charges foreign from the

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- a—Of a private nature
- b—Of a public nature
- 3. Reply to the charges contained in the indictment.
- 4. Strictures upon the character, and course of his antagonist, compared with his own.
- 5. Peroration.

Cicero's orations are more numerous than Demosthenes. He was a man of more varied and extensive attainments, and of greater versatility of talent. Among the most famous productions of Rome's greatest orator, are his speeches on the injustice of Verres, and the conspiracy of Cataline. It would be well to enter into detail here, were it not that in such an Institution as this, the work would be one of supererogation.

Demosthenes and Cicero are the opposites in style. If Demosthenes be the prince of orators, then one may obtain to the highest position in the art, and yet be almost entirely deficient in ideality. Demosthenes deals in logic and facts. His argumentation is iron linked; and when he smites, it is as though he wielded one of the thunder-bolts of Jove. Cicero, on the other hand, is less strong, but more graceful, grander, and more magnificent. The one speaks in sentences, short, vivid, and of lightning stroke; the other, in sentences long, easy, flowing and majestic. The State endangered, or in emer-

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"Aeschines, hearest thou this? * * * Why, then, accused wretch, hast thou reproached me so wantonly on this head? Why has thou denounced against me that which the Gods in justice can denounce only on thee, and thy vile associates? * * * * He accuses me of favoring Philip! Heavens, and earth, what would not this man assert?" * * * * * "Wretches, flatterers, miscreants, tearing out the vitals of their country, and tendering its liberties first to Philip, and then to Alexander! Was it thus with me? By no means, my countrymen. My conduct throughout has been influenced by a spirit of rectitude, justice, and integrity. I have been engaged in affairs of greater moment than any statesmen of my time; and I have administered them with an exact fidelity, and uncorrupted faith; and these are the merits on which I claim this honor."

Take the following from Cicero's oration, in favor of Milo—a candidate for the consulship:

"Indeed, if I imagined, it (a guard) was stationed there in opposition to Milo, I should

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"Indeed, if I imagined, it (a guard) was stationed there in opposition to Milo, I should

give way to the times, and conclude there was no room for an orator in the midst of such an armed force. But the prudence of Pompey, a man of such distinguished wisdom and equity, whose justice will never permit him to leave exposed to the rage of soldiery, a person whom he has delivered up to legal trial, nor his wisdom to give the sanction of public authority to the outrage of a furious mob, both cheers and relieves me. Wherefore, those centurions and cohorts, so far from threatening me with danger, assure me of protection; they not only banish my fears, but inspire me with courage, and promise that I shall be heard not only with safety, but with silence and attention."

By this comparison of extracts, you will perceive that in beauty and harmony of diction, Cicero is superior to Demosthenes. There is about the Roman a power of insinuation, a worming of one's self into the affection, which the great Grecian does not possess. To sum up in a few words the comparison between these two lights of ancient history, it may be said that Cicero *wins*, Demosthenes *compels*.

I come now to modern times, and in doing so, shall be compelled by want of time, to pass over the names which form so brilliant a galaxy on the pages of English and Irish history. I should be glad to speak of Burke, of Curran, of Fox, of Pitt, of Sheridan, of Erskine, of Mansfield, of Grattan, of Brough-

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am, of Shiel; but glad though I should be to do it, yet to night at least, time tells me to forbear. I come then at once, to America.

The most eminent orator which America in her prosperous days produced, is unquestionably Daniel Webster; and the greatest speech, viewed artistically, which has ever been delivered on the American Continent is his reply to Hayne. Though this speech (or, I should say, parts of it) is repeated at almost every school-room declamation, yet, to me, at least, it has lost none of its freshness and its vigor. The origin of this most celebrated oration is well known to all who are in the least acquainted with American history. For my present purpose, it is sufficient to say, that the body of the speech is an exposition of constitutional law, and an argument against nullification. Though necessarily abounding in abstract reasoning, it, by no means, lacks that vitality which stirs the blood, and arouse to the highest possible excitement every faculty of the human soul. One who was present, says, that where the orator reached the point where he concluded the encomium upon the land of his nativity—New England—no one who was not present, could possibly understand the excitement of the scene; and no one who was present could give an adequate description of it. “No word painting could convey the intense, deep enthusiasm—the rever-

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It is in the light of this speech and his present character that the words of the Poet fall upon our ears in sounds which send deep sadness to the inner heart.

"So fallen so lost, the light withdrawn
Which once he wore!
The glory from his grey hairs gone
Forevermore!"

Scorn! Would the angels laugh to mark
A bright soul driven
Fiend goaded down the endless dark,
From hope to heaven?

All else is gone; from those great eyes
The soul has fled.
When faith is lost, when honor dies,
The man is dead!"

Compared to Clay, Webster is less a ge-

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The speeches of Webster are destined to fill a large and important place in the history of American literature; and not only so, some hundred years hence will be read with more eagerness than now. In reading, we may separate the thought and the man, but the human mind is so constructed that it can not thus deal with the speaker who *lives* his history among us. As models of a style uniting beautifully the simple and the majestic, the speeches of Webster are unsurpassed, and, I believe, unsurpassable.

As an offset to Webster, I will now introduce to you the celebrated John B. Gough. Though in mental energy vastly inferior to Webster, he has nevertheless produced results, which Webster could not achieve. Who believes that Webster could deliver one hundred and eighty lectures on the same topic, to the same audience, and, to the last, keep his audience in ecstacies of delight? And, yet, John B. Gough has done this—in no less a city than Boston—the most enlightened in the Union, and consequently, the most difficult to speak in. This is an intellectual phenomenon, and needs to be explained. Demosthenes tells us, “that which is called el-

nus, so far as genius lies in contrivance and the ability to lead, but a man of more significant talent. This superlatively great and superlatively bad men of America, is eminently an expounder and defender, not a leader and aggressor.

The speeches of Webster are destined to fill a large and important place in the history of American literature; and not only so, some hundred years hence will be read with more eagerness than now. In reading, we may separate the thought and the man, but the human mind is so constructed that it can not thus deal with the speaker who *lives* his history among us. As models of a style uniting beautifully the simple and the majestic, the speeches of Webster are unsurpassed, and, I believe, unsurpassable.

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quence, depends no less upon the audience than upon the speaker." Here, then, is the unravelling of the mystery. Between the speaker and the audience there must exist a sympathy, which sympathy being wanting, and though the speaker should be, as Dr. Beecher said Theodore D. Weld was, "as eloquent as an angel, and as powerful as thunder," he would, nevertheless, be tame to those who heard him. "Put your soul in my soul's stead," contains a world of philosophy. Webster appeals more directly to the logical and reasoning faculties, and these are active in comparatively few. Gough appeals more directly to the sympathies, and touches the chords which vibrate most readily in the deep depths of the human heart. And, in no respect, does he more completely show his ability in adapting means to ends than in the fact that while he comes down to the level of his audience, he keeps just far enough above them to inspire them with respect. In style, he is dramatic in the extreme. He is, in fact, a consummate actor, every limb speaking a distinct and emphatic language. He is witty, and his wit is always fresh. He is humorous, and his humor is always genial. He is pathetic, and his pathos always touching. He is benevolent and sarcastic, insinuating and compulsive. His logic lies in facts, not in form, and his rhetoric in a sincere love of the drunkard, and a straightforward endeavor to inspire the

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same degree of love and earnestness in others. His language is chaste; and though a consummate actor, his general appearance, paradoxical as it may seem, is still quite dignified and impressive. Having heard Gough several times, these are the opinions which I entertain of his oratory.

I come now to the latest and the greatest of orators, whether of ancient or modern date—I mean Louis Kossuth. Partaking somewhat of the prevailing spirit of excitement, I, too, travelled some ninety miles to get a sight of the lion. Be it understood that my travel was to see Louis Kossuth, the man of genius—not Louis Kossuth, “the world’s Apostle of Liberty.” This latter title I have never awarded him, and am less inclined to do it now than at any former period. I do not design to discuss his principles or his policy. These have no relation to this lecture, and with regard to these, men may be innocently permitted to cherish different opinions. And, were I disposed to discuss his principles or his policy at length, I should defer to do so, at least at present, as I do not regard myself as competent to the task. This much I know, however, and this much I will say, that nations are but conveniences, and were never designed to abrogate the great law of equal brotherhood.—He, therefore, that would appropriate to himself the title of “Apostle of Liberty,” must have a heart not circumcised by national

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lines, and sympathies which can grasp the entire human family. Kossuth has no such heart, and no such sympathies; or, if he has them, what is quite as bad, he has failed to give them expression. Not a word in reference to the wrongs of the American slave has he ever dropped in this country. He has not even called him by name; thereby giving the impression to those who might not know the contrary, that not a slave walked o'er all this fair America. Before his countrymen, before the world, and before his God, I charge him with the utterance of statements which are not only false, but which he could not, by any possibility, have failed to know were such. "A great, a glorious, a FREE people," said he, at the editorial banquet in New York;—"a great word this, gentlemen, but it is LITERALLY (!) true!" LITERALLY *true* that we are a *free* people! Heavens! was ever irony so severe?

Now, be it understood, that Kossuth is not asked to leave his Hungary, and adopt the cause of the American Slave: nor to divide his energies between the one cause and the other. Nobody would ask that unless he be a fool. He is simply asked to be truthful, to abide by the law of Rectitude, and to leave his country in the hands of the Great God, who holdeth *all* nations in his hands, even as a very little thing. He is asked, and ye shall be the judges, whether it be not right that he should thus be asked, to be a Philan-

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I shall not enter into historical detail. All knows that Kossuth now lies in the jaws of the Austrian tyrant, and that Kossuth is the length and the breadth, the heighth and the depth of the movement that has for its object her complete and entire release. For the energy, self-sacrifice, and patriotism which he has displayed in behalf of his bleeding Hungary, let honor crown him with a golden crown; but forbear to call him "the World's Apostle of Liberty."

The Hungarians, or, to speak more specifically, the Magyars, are descendants of a very feeble race of Northern Asiatics. They were driven about a thousand years ago, by the Turkish invasion, into Hungary; and, finding that part of Hungary to which they were driven to be an exceedingly fertile spot, they changed entirely their former mode of life. In Asia, they were wanderers from pillar to post; in Europe they adopted a settled manner of life. The result of this was a continual going upward in intellectual and moral improvement. The Magyars are also a mixed race. In the sixth century they became mixed with the Persians on the shores of the Baltic; and in the ninth century with the Hunns. It is, doubtless, owing to this mixture, and their favorable climate, that the

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"How great is the progress of Humanity! Its steps are counted centuries; and, yet while countless millions stood almost at the same point where they stood, and some even have declined since America first emerged out of an unexploded darkness, which had covered her for thousands of years, like the gem in the sea; while it is but yesterday, a few pilgrims landed on the wilds of Plymouth, flying from causeless oppression— seeking but for a place of refuge and of rest, and for a free spot in the wilderness to adore the Almighty in their own way; still, in such a brief time—shorter than the recorded genealogy of the noble horse of the wandering Arab—yes, almost within the turn of the hand—out of the unknown wilderness, a mighty empire arose, broad as an ocean, solid as a mountain rock, and upon the scarcely rotted roots of the primitive forest, proud cities stand, teeming with boundless life—growing like the prairie's grass in spring—advancing like the steam engine— baffling time and distance like the telegraph—and spreading the pulsation of their life-tide to the remotest parts of the world; and

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in those cities, and on that broad land, a nation, free as the mountain air, independent as the soaring eagle, active as nature, and powerful as the giant strength of millions of freemen.

"How wonderful! What a present, and what a future yet! Future?—then, let me stop at this mysterious word—the veil of unrevealed eternity!

"The shadow of that dark word passed across my mind, amid the bustle of this gigantic bee-hive—there I stood with meditation alone.

"And the spirit of the immoveable Past rose before my eyes, unfolding the misty picture-rolls of vanished greatness, and of the fragility of human things.

"And among their dissolving views, there I saw the scorched soil of Africa, and upon that soil Thebes, with its hundred gates, more splendid than the most splendid of all the existing cities of the world; Thebes, the pride of old Egypt, the first metropolis of arts and sciences, and mysterious cradle of so many doctrines which still rule mankind in different states, though it has long forgotten their source. There I saw Syria, with its hundred cities—every city a nation—and every nation with an empire's might. Baalbec, with its gigantic temples—the very ruins of which baffle the imagination of man—as they stand like mountains of carved rocks in the desert, where, for hundreds of miles, not

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a stone is to be found, and no river flows, offering its tolerant back to mountain's weight upon, and there they stand, those gigantic ruins; and as we glance at them with astonishment, though we have mastered the mysterious elements of nature, and know the combination of levers, and how to catch the lightning, and command the power of steam, and of compressed air—and how to write with the burning fluid out of which the thunder bolt is forged—and how to drive the current of streamers up the mountain's top—and how to make the air shine in the night, like the light of the sun—and how to rise up the bottom of the deep ocean—and how to rise up to the sky—though we know all this, and many things else, still, looking at the temple of Baalbec, we cannot forbear to ask what people of giants was that, which could do what neither the efforts of our skill, nor the ravaging hand of unrelenting time can undo, though thousands of years. And then, I saw the dissolving picture of Ninevah, with its ramparts covered with mountains of sand, where Layard is digging up colossal-winged balls, huge as a mountain, and yet carved with the nicety of a canoe; and then Babylon, with its wonderful walls; and Jerusalem, with its unequalled Temple; Tyrus, with its countless fleets; Arad, with its wharves; and Sydon, with its labyryth of workshops and factories, and Askelou, and Gaza, and Beyrout, and farther off, Persepolis, with its

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"All these passed before my eyes, as they have been; and again they pass as they now are, with no trace of their ancient greatness, but here and there a ruin, and everywhere the desolation of tombs. With all their splendor, power, and might, they vanished like a bubble, or like the dream of a child, leaving but for a moment, a drop of cold sweat upon the sleeper's brow, or a quivering smile upon his lips; then, this wiped away, dream, sweat—all is nothingness!"

Cicero says (*De Oratore*) that "no man can be an accomplished orator who has not a fund of universal knowledge, and a thorough knowledge of all the affections which nature has implanted in the human soul." Certainly no one approaches nearer this definition than does the illustrious Kossuth. His knowledge of history is profound, and so indeed even of local circumstances. During his stay in this country, nothing has surprised the people more than that he should know almost every body, and literally almost everything. He is, in his knowledge, as expansive as profound, and as profound as expansive. Antiquity, the laws of nations, of States, of Empires, of Kingdoms, of races, and even municipal law, are at his tongue's end, to be used just when and where he wishes. It is amazing that one head so small can carry so great a weight. His wonderful knowledge also is not more remarkable than

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His knowledge of all the affections which nature has implanted in the human soul, is also as thorough as Cicero would have it.— When the Austria-Russian army were on the borders of Hungary, Kossuth employed himself, body and soul of Hungary as he was, in addressing assemblies of his countrymen. In a few days the Austrians, Russians, Sclavonians, Croats, Serbs and Wallachians were expected to come down like a crushing avalanche upon doomed and unhappy Hungary. There was but a moment left him, so the historian tells us; and that moment was to leave behind it either liberty or annihilation. I give the words of the narrator: "Rising to make a speech, after passing deliberately through a long array of facts and arguments by which he carried conviction into every heart, he ceased to speak, but still maintained his position. Raising his large and now watery eyes to Heaven, he seemed to be making his last petition at the throne of Eternal Justice. A cloud passed over his brow, as if he then saw by prophetic illumination a revelation of the future. Then lowering his aspect a little, and looking abroad, through the open windows of the building, upon the grand and historical scenery about him—the river, the plains, the

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In style, if I may use the expression, Kos-suth is aromatic and luxuriant. As a de-claimer, he is inferior to Thompson; and this, no doubt, arises from the fact, that while the one deals largely in denunciation, the other almost entirely discards it. Nothing in Kos-suth’s speeches, in the line denunciatory, equals the denunciation of America, delivered by George Thompson, one year ago, in the city of Syracuse. The denunciation was embodied in a comparison of American with Russia. Those who were present on the oc-
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useth it well. Some sins are to be reasoned out, some are to be ridiculed out, and some are to be denounced out of the world.

In personal appearance, Kossuth is dignified and impressive. He has not the colossal look of Webster, but his manners are certainly much more insinuating and graceful. He is of medium height, and most superb gait. His smile is the most winning—most fascinating—that I have ever encountered in mortal man—not woman. His eyes express dreaminess, rather than energy of character; though this latter trait is certainly his, by way of pre-eminent right. His voice is deep toned, and sepulchral; and well calculated to produce oratorical effect. I should regard him as democratic in all his thoughts and feelings. Certainly, if he is not so, he has consummate ability to adapt himself to circumstances. At the various depots at which the cars stopped on his way from Syracuse to Utica, he mingled as freely with the multitude as his hurried circumstances would permit; and always had a fitting reply to the various remarks of which he was recipient. To a question put by a codger in the crowd, as to what were the prospects for Hungary? he made the reply, not so remarkable for its words as its manner.—“Ah,” said he, “that is a long tale.—We must fight a little, and leave the rest with the Almighty God.” If I were an ultra peace men, I should be disposed to criticise

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this remark, but as I am not, I pass it without comment.

Having said this much, I now take my leave of the exile, the patriot, and the orator: and, could I, in conscience do it, would gladly add the Philanthropist and the Christian.

I can not close this lecture without a tribute to the colored people of this country— Already have they done something to achieve a place among those who have written their names in large letters upon the pages of the orator's history; and, being yet in a transition state, we may expect developments in the oratorical art which shall surpass any thing which ever yet they have made.

Ward, as a stump orator, has certainly few superiors. A friend writing from New York city in reference to his celebrated speech in reply to Dr. Grant, said he could no more report that speech than he could the coruscations of lightning. The Doctor attempted to prove scientifically that the African was but a connecting link between the man and the monkey. Douglass was also present, and, of course, made such a reply as Frederick Douglass *can* make. The Doctor, however rejected the reply of Douglass, on the ground that he was no African, but was full one-half white. At this jumped up Ward; and all who have seen him will agree with me, that *bluer* men there may be, but *blacker* men, never.

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Ye gods! what a battle! The result may be imagined; it certainly need not be described. Miller McKim, of Philadelphia describing that same conflict, said: "Ward looked like a statue of black marble of the old Egyptian sort, out of which our white civilization was hewn. He was a cloud to behold; but intellect lighted behind that cloud; and as he annihilated his opponent, he looked as rich in his blackness as the velvet pall upon the bier of an Emperor."

Garnet, as an orator, is more polished than Ward, as well as more elaborate. He has more application as a student—is more consecutive in his thoughts, and employs more method in their arrangement. He would, consequently, be more pleasing to a select audience; while a promiscuous one would be more easily swayed by Ward. His personal appearance is fine. He is about five feet and two inches tall, erect of figure, and somewhat slender in build. He is as black as Ward, but of smoother texture of skin; has a fine eye, and prominent brow. He dresses in the best broadcloth, and with most scrupulous exactness; carries a cane, and altogether his presence impresses you with the fact, that, though somewhat aristocratic, he is, nevertheless, not only a well-bred man, but a most accomplished gentleman.— He is a cousin of Ward, and is, as Ward is, a Southern. Hot blood runs in his veins; and he would throttle the life out of a slave-

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holder with as little compunction of conscience as he would tread the life out of a snake. The following is taken from a witness address delivered by this orator a few years since in Troy.

"The silence that reigns in the region where the pale nations of the earth slumber is solemn and awful. But what think ye, when ye are told that every rood of this Union is the grave of a murdered man, and their epitaphs are written upon the monuments of the nation's wealth. Ye destroyers of my people draw near, and read the mournful inscription; aye, read it, until it is daguerreotyped on your souls. You have slain us all the day long. You have had no mercy! Legions of haggard ghosts stalk through the land. Behold, see, they come—Oh, what myriads! Hark, hear their broken bones as they clatter together. With deep, unearthly voices, they cry, "We come, we come, for vengeance we come!" Tremble, guilty nation, for the God of Justice lives and reigns. The screaming of the eagle, as he darts through lightning and storm, is unheard because of these voices. The tocsin of the Sabbath, and the solemn organ are mocked by them. They drown the preacher's voice, and produce discord in the sacred choirs. Sworn Senators and perjured demagogues as they officiate around the altar of Moloch in the national capitol—hear the wailings of the victims of base born democracy, and they are ill at ease in their

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unexampled hypocrisy. The father of waters may roar in his progress to the ocean—the Niagara may thunder, but these voices from the living and the dead will rise above them all."

This is eloquence. You being the judges, tell me does the history of English oratory contain aught more awfully grand in conception, or beautiful in expression?

In versatility of oratorical power, I know of no one who can begin to approach the celebrated Frederick Douglass. He, in very deed, sways a magic wand. In the ability to imitate, he stands almost alone, and unapproachable; and there is no actor living, whether he be tragedian or comedian, who would not give the world for such a face as his. His slaveholder's sermon is a masterpiece in its line. When he rises to speak, there is a slight hesitancy in his manner, which disappears as he warms up to his subject. He works with the power of a mighty intellect, and in the vast audiences which he never fails to assemble, touches chords in the inner chambers thereof which vibrate music now sweet, now sad, now lightsome, now solemn, now startling, now grand, now majestic, now sublime. He has a voice of terrific power, of great compass, and under most admirable control. Douglass is not only great in oratory, tongue-wise, but, considering his circumstances of early life, still more marvellous in composition penwise.—

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He has no fear of man; is no abstractionist; has a first-rate philosophy of reform; believes the boy would never have learned to swim if he had not gone into the water; and is, consequently, particularly obnoxious to tavern-keepers and steamboat captains, and those in general who mix up character and color, man and his skin—and to all, in short, who have little hearts and muddy heads.— He is the pride of the colored man, and the terror of slaveholders and their abettors.— Long may he live—an honor to his age, his race, his country, and the world.

Gladly would I devote a few lines to the eloquent Remond, but I must not draw too largely on your patience. This orator has remarkable fluency, and on his favorite theme—prejudice against color—wields a sarcasm which bites the heart to its very core.

But what say you—shall we not hear of Garrison, of Smith, of Phillips? Gladly also would I speak of those; but who, in one evening, can do justice to either Garrison, or Smith, or Phillips? These are emphatically a nation's glory—earth's noblest spirits.— Great in oratory, they are greater still in the majesty of a character built upon, and interlocked by, the law of Eternal Rectitude.— Garrison is the best misunderstood man in America. Regarded as rabid, fanatical, and almost inhuman, no man living presents a more consistent embodiment of whatsoever

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in Christianity is lovely and of good report. The charge that stands good against him is, that he is death to time-servers and those who make a mockery of the principles of Christianity and Reform. His oratory is peculiarly expressive of his character—remarkable for his serenity, and for that calmness which indicates great inward strength and power. Wendell Phillips is well known as emphatically *the orator of New England*. He has a vigorous declamation, which is well set off by a matchless beauty of diction. Indeed, no orator in America better unites in his style what are usually regarded as opposites—strength and polish. He is particularly felicitous in anecdote, and his speeches generally are as the day. It is a positive luxury to meet him in the street, so benignantly does he tip his hat to the humblest of his acquaintances. Gerrit Smith is one of the most remarkable men that ever lived in this age, or in any age: remarkable for his intellect, remarkable for his purity of heart, remarkable for his child-like simplicity, and for that majesty of soul which accepts to the full that sublime doctrine of Christian faith—"Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you." It is hardly a figure of speech to say that his character throughout is as luminous as the sunbeams. Where he treads, no angel of sorrow follows. His oratory is gradually impressive. He moves with slow steps, but steady purpose, and

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I come now to the last division of this lecture. There are three specific fields for oratorical effort. These are the bar, the pulpit, and the hall of legislation. To develop the speaking faculties, *more specifically* as such, the bar is unquestionably superior to the pulpit or the legislative hall. The opposing counsel, who sits with a dogged determination to controvert every position; twelve men gazing with all their might and main, and whom, for the time being, one can not help regarding as holding the scales of fate; the judge or judges eyeing one with the coolness and suspicion which contribute but little to one's comfort; all these have inevitably the tendency to force the advocate into a concentration of thought, and an energy of feeling, which all admit are the surest guarantees of effective and powerful delivery. For the development of the *highest* powers of the orator, the pulpit is probably superior to the bar. For the development of *perceptive* in

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oratory, the bar is superior to the pulpit; while the development of the *reflective*, the pulpit is superior to the bar. The lawyer deals with the concrete, the preacher with the abstract. The lawyer thinks, but he must do it rapidly, and, consequently less profoundly; or if not less profoundly, certainly less comprehensively. The preacher thinks, but not compelled to do it rapidly, he may do it more profoundly. Legislative eloquence necessarily differs materially from that of either the pulpit or the bar. The preacher talks of heaven—why should he not be glowing? The lawyer of the wrongs or misfortunes of his client—why should he be dry or prosy? The legislator, *as a legislator*, discourses for the most part, of abstract principles, measures of public policy, and of law, either national or municipal, and can hardly be expected to be more than dignified and convincing. There is yet another field for oratorical effort—and that is the public platform. Here “popular” eloquence produces its mighty effects. An analysis of this eloquence may be the theme for another lecture.

For oratorical purposes, the English language is not surpassed by any living tongue. It is not so compact, so abtruse, so subtle, as the language of the ancient Grecian, but it is much more simple in its construction, and, certainly, fully as impressive and commanding. It is a language of great wealth, being

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made up of contributions from almost every language under the sun. Its basis is Saxon and Celtic. It is of noble sound, but not so rich in melody as either the ancient Greek, or the modern Spanish and Italian. Charles V., speaking merrily, says, "We should speak Spanish with the Gods, Italian with our mistress, French with our friend, German with soldiers, *English with geese*, Hungarian with horses, and Bohemian with the devil."—

The continuous hissing sound, so peculiar with the English, no doubt, induced the funny monarch to institute such a comparison. Language is but an expression of national mind and character. The Greek language is subtle and philosophical, because the Greeks were subtle and philosophical. The Latin is stiff, and right about face. The English is flexible and energetic, because those who speak it are in character flexible and energetic. It is not only true that as a nation's mind is, so will a nation's language be, but it is also true, that as a language is, so will those who speak it be. Foreigners to a language, therefore, will assimilate in character, while *even in their own land*, to the people whose language they may speak. The Norman Conquest was greatly facilitated by teaching those who fled from Britain to Normandy during the period of the Danish sway in Britain, to read and speak the Norman language. I have introduced this short dissertation on language, because I thought it not

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inappropriate in a lecture on oratory.

And, now, members of the Dialexian Society, having thus spoken of oratory—its origin, its purpose, its effects, and having illustrated the subject, as well as I was able, by a reference to some of its brightest lights, I now address to you a word, which, I trust, you will receive as, indeed, I know you will, in kindness and in friendship. You live in a great country. So far as energy, intellect, and activity constitute greatness, the sun has never seen its equal. You not only live in a great country, but a country most remarkable for its spirit of compromise—for calling that which is bitter, sweet, and that which is bad, good. You live in a country where the combat deepens, and still deepens, between the spirit of freedom and the spirit of the pit.—Now, which side will ye choose? Need I put the question again? I trust not. May I not say, *I know where your are?*

Then, members of this society, as ye cultivate the oratorical, do it diligently, and with purpose; remembering that it is by the exercise of this weapon, perhaps more than any other, that America is to be made a free land, not in name only, but in deed and in truth. Remember, also, that as with individuals, so with nations; both can become effectual teachers of the democratic idea, only by exemplifying in their lives the principles they profess. Oh, America, that I could take thee to my bosom as *indeed* the

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