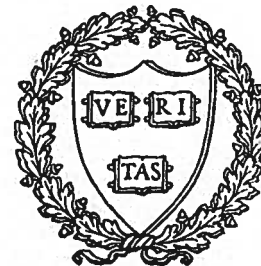


HARVARD COLLEGE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

BY

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CLASS OF 1908



PART I
(of 2)

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Mercatorum-Scissorum (the Merchant Taylors' School, of which William Dugard was headmaster in the 1640's) was the other; but the only students' copies that I have found were acquired in school, not at Harvard.¹ The book was imported by the dozen by Boston booksellers after 1680.²

There have come down to us, with evidence of Harvard undergraduate ownership, a large number of those phrase-books and thesauri to which students have had recourse for their Latin compositions ever since universities began. We have two copies of Johannes Buchler's *Sacrarum profanarumque phrasium Poeticarum Thesaurus* (London, 1642, 1679); three of John Clarke's *Formulae Oratoriae in usum scholarum concinnatae* (London, 1659, 1672);³ Thomas Draxe's 'Treasurie of ancient Adagies, and sententious Prouerbes' (London, 1633); Fundanus' *Phrases poeticae seu sylvae Poeticarum* (Rotterdam, 1621); Lycosthenes' *Apophthegmata* (London, 1635); Aldus' *Phrases Linguae Latinae* (London, 1636); Simon Pelegrom's *Synonymorum Sylva* (London, 1650); and several anonymous *Phraseologia* and *Formulae*. Several copies of a popular collection of speeches from Sallust, Livy, Tacitus, and Quintus Curtius, called *Conciones et Orationes ex Historicis Latinis excerpta*, with short prefaces describing the occasions, a 'work recognized and received for use of the Schools of Holland and West Frisa' (Amsterdam, 1652), are found in our older libraries with student scribblings.

Every Harvard student must have been familiar with the Colloquies of Erasmus. I have seen at least six copies inscribed with seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Harvard names; but so dated that they must have been acquired in grammar school.⁴ Doubtless some of these were taken by their owners to college;

1. A Farnaby, 1646 edition, used by Daniel Greenleaf and Moses Hale (A.B. 1699) in 1690-92, and another copy with no title-page, inscribed 'Samuel Mather's Book 1707' (when no Samuel Mather is known to have been in college), are in the A. A. S., which also has a 1712 Dugard owned by Joseph Lynde, but undated. The H. C. L. has a copy of the fifteenth edition of Dugard (London, 1721), owned by Isaiah Dunster (A.B. 1741) and Timothy Harrington (A.B. 1737) before they entered Harvard.

2. Worthington C. Ford, *Boston Book Market*, pp. 90, 126, 150.

3. *Id.* 98, noting the importation of a dozen in 1680.

4. One of these, a mutilated copy in the Prince Library at the B. P. L., first belonged to John Richardson (A.B. 1666). On an inside page is written 'The boys that belong to the publick grammar school,' followed by the names of twenty-five or more boys at the Boston Latin School around the year 1700. Cf. Ford, *op. cit.*, pp. 85, 88, 123, 124, 141.

for Erasmus' Colloquies have always been in high favor with young men, whose pleasures and problems they touch at many points. Cotton and Nathaniel Mather owned in college an *Epitome adagiorum Erasmi et aliorum*, with 562 pages of classified sayings of the great humanist; and one Simon Willard, presumably the graduate of 1695, owned a black-letter edition (London, 1564) of Nicholas Udall's salty translation, entitled:

Apophthegmes, that is to saie, prompte, quicke, wittie and sententious saynges, of certaine Emperours, Kynges, Capitaines, Philosophiers and Orateurs, as well Grekes, as Romaines, bothe verie pleasaunt and profitable to reade, partely for all maner of persones, especially Gentlemenne. First gathered and compiled in Latin by the right famous clerke Maister Erasmus of Roterodame.

ORATORY

This severe training in Latin composition was highly 'purposeful' on the part of the colonial undergraduate, since it was all done in preparation for delivering orations, both in the classical tongues and in English. These declamations, as they were called, bore the same relation to Rhetoric as the disputations to logical training. Monthly 'publique declamations in *Latine* and *Greeke*' were already on the programme in 1643;¹ 'publike Exercises of oratory' in the 'Mother-tounge' are mentioned in the College Laws of 1642-46;² and the Laws of 1655 included two public declamations among the requirements for the second degree. Fortunately there are preserved two of these exercises, which Michael Wigglesworth (A.B. 1651) delivered in college hall at the beginning of his senior bachelor year.³

Wigglesworth's declamations are in English, and the title of each is 'The prayse of Eloquence.' From one of them I have selected two long passages, beginning at a point where the

1. *F. H. C.*, pp. 433, 435-36. The Laws of 1655 reduce the requirement to once every two months (*C. S. M.*, xxxi. 334). In 1674 the Corporation ordered declaimers to deliver fair copies of their orations to their tutor or the President (*C. S. M.*, xv. 58). The precocious Nathaniel Mather (A.B. 1685) delivered a Hebrew oration on 'Academical Affairs among the ancient Jews' at his Commencement; and doubtless other examples could be found of Hebrew declamations. Sibley, III. 322.

2. *F. H. C.*, p. 336.

3. Wigglesworth's ms. Notebook, enlarged photostat in H. C. L.; original in N. E. H. G. S. The second oration is dated August 30, 1653.

orator takes up 'the incredible efficacy and power of eloquence . . . in teaching':

How sweetly doth eloquence even inforce trueth upon the understanding, and subtly convey knowledge into the minde be it never so dull of conceiving, and sluggish in yeelding its assente. So that let a good Oratour put forth the utmost of his skill, and you shall hear him so lay open and unfould, so evidence and demonstrate from point to point what he hath in hand, that he wil make a very block understand his discourse. Let him be to giue a description of something absent or unknown; how strangely doth he realize and make it present to his hearers apprehensions, framing in their mindes as exact an idea of that which they never saw, as they can possibly have of any thing that they have bin longest and best acquainted with. Or doth he take upon him to personate some others in word or deedes why he presents his hearers not with a lifeless picture, but with the living persons of those concerning whom he speaks. They see, they hear, they handle them, they walk they talk with them, and what not? Or is he to speak about such things as are already known? Why should he here discourse after the vulgar manner, and deliver his mind as a cobbler would doe: his hearers might then have some ground to say they knew as much as their oratour could teach them. But by the power of eloquence ould truth receivs a new habit. though its essence be the same yet its visage is so altered that it may currently pass and be accepted as a novelty. The same verity is again and again perhaps set before the same guests but drest and disht up after a new manner, and every manner season'd so well that the intellectuall parts may both without nauseating receiv, and so oft as it doth receiv it still draw some fresh nourishing virtue from it. So that Eloquence giues new luster and bewty, new strength new vigour, new life unto trueth; presenting it with such variety as refresheth, actuating it with such hidden powerful energy, that a few languid sparks are blown up to a shining flame.

And which is yet more: Eloquence doth not onely revieve the things known but secretly convey life into the hearers understanding rousing it out of its former slumber, quickning it beyond its naturall vigour, elevating it aboue its ordinary conception. There are not onely objects set before it, but ey's (after a sort) giuen it to see these objects in such wise as it never saw. Yea it is strengthened as to apprehend that which is taught it, so of it self with enlargement to comprehend many things which are not made known unto it. Hence it comes to pass that after the hearing of a wel-composed speech livelily exprest the understanding of the Auditor is so framed into the mould of Eloquence, that he could almost goe away and compose the like himself either upon the same or another subject. And whats the reason of this? why his mind

is transported with a kind of rapture, and inspired with a certain oratoric fury, as if the oratour together with his words had breathed his soul and spirit into those that hear him.

These and the like effects hath Eloquence upon the understanding. But furthermore 'tis a fit bait to catch the will and affections. For hereby they are not onely layd in wait for, but surprized: nor onely surprized, but subdued; nor onely subdued, but triumphed over. Yet Eloquence beguil's with such honesty, subdues with such mildness, triumphs with such sweetness: that here to be surprized is nothing dangerous, here to be subject is the best freedom, this kind of servitude is more desireable then liberty. For whereas our untractable nature refuseth to be drawn, and a stiff will scorn's to be compel'd: yet by the power of wel-composed speech nature is drawn against the stream with delight, and the will after a sort compelled with its owne consent. Altho: for a time it struggle and make resistance, yet at length it suffer's it self to be vanquish't, and takes a secret contentment in being overcome.

In like manner, for the affections. Look as a mighty river augmented with excessiue rains or winter snows swelling above its wonted channel bear's down banks and bridges, overflows feilds and hedges, sweeps away all before it, that might obstruct its passage: so Eloquence overturn's, overturn's all things that stand in its way, and carries them down with the irresistible stream of its all controuling power. Wonderful it were to speak of the severall discoverys of the power in severall affections: wonderfull but to think in generall, how like a blustering tempest it one while driues before it the raging billow's of this troubled Ocean: how other whiles (as though it had them in fetters it curb's and calm's the fury at a word. And all this without offering violence to the party's so affected; nay with a secret pleasure and delight it stirs men up to the greatest displeasure and distast. Doth it affect with grief? why to be so grieved is no grievance. doth it kindle coales, nay flames of fiery indignation? why those flames burn not, but rather cherish. doth it draw tears from the eys? why even tears flow with pleasure. For as is wel sayd by one upon this point In omni animi motu etiam in dolore est quaedam jucunditas. So potently, so sweetly doth Eloquence command. and of a skilfull orator in point of the affections that may be spoken really, which the Poet affirmeth fabulously of Æolus god of the winds. . . .

But I need instance no more. some of you I hope will by this time assent unto what has bin hitherto prov'd that Eloquence is of such useful concernment and powerfull operation. But methinks I hear some still objecting. 'Tis very true Eloquence is a desirable thing, but what are we the better for knowing its worth unless we could hope our selues to attain it? It is indeed a right excellent indowment but 'tis not

every capacity, nay scarce one of a hundreth that can reach it. How many men of good parts do we find that yet excel not here? Cicero indeed, a man in whom vast understanding and naturall fluent facility of speech conspire together; no marvail if he make judges weep and princes tremble. But to what purpose is it for a man of weak parts and mean abilitys to labour after that which he is never like to compass? Had we not as good toss our caps against the wind as weary out our selves in the pursuit of that which so few can reach to?

An. To these I would answer first, the reason why so few attain it is because there [are] few that indeed desire it. hence they run not as if they ment to win, they pursue not as if they hop't to overtake. But 2ly let me answer them with Turner's' words upon this very argument Negligentiam nostram arguit, qui cum non possimus. quod debemus, optimus, nolumus quod possimus, benè. we cannot do what we would therefore will not doe what we may. This savours of a slouthfull sistem. Because we cannot keep pace with the horsemen, shall we refuse to accompany the footmen? Because we cannot run, shall we sit down and refuse to goe? we cannot reach so far as our selues desire and as some others it may be attain, shall we not therefore reach as far as our endeavours may carry us? Because we cannot be Oratores optimi, do we content our selues to be Oratores Pessimi?

And as for those that have most excell'd in this kind, whence had they their excellency? they did not come declaiming into the world: they were not born with orations in their mouths: eloquence did not sit upon their lips whilest they lay in their cradles: neither did they suck it in from their mothers breasts. But if you examine the matter you shall find that by incredible paines and daly exercise, they even turn'd the cours of nature into another channel, and cut out a way for the gentle stream of Eloquence, where naturall impediments seem'd altogether to deny it passage: thereby effecting as much as another could bragg, *viam aut inveniã aut faciam*: Eminent in this respect is the example of the two best oratours that fame has brought to our ears. Of Cicero, who when he had naturally a shrill, screaming, ill-tun'd voyce rising to such a note that it indanger'd his very life: yet by art and industry he acquired such a commendable habit, as none with ease could speak more sweetly than he. And Demosthenes, though he were naturally of a stammering tongue crasy-body'd and broken-winded, and withall had accustom'd himself to a jetting uncomely deportment of his body, or some part of it at least: when to conclude he had scarce any part of an oratour, saue onely an ardent desire to be an oratour: yet by his indefatigable paines he so overcame these naturall defects, as that he came to be reputed prince of the Græcian Eloquence. Though this was not gotten without some further

1. Cf. *F. H. C.*, p. 71.

difficulty and seeming vain attempts. Insomuch as he was severall times quite discouraged, and once threw all aside, despairing ever to become an oratour because the people laught at his orations. yet notwithstanding being heartned to it again by some of his welwillers, he never left striving till he had won the prize.

Go too therefore my fellow-students (for to you I address my speech, my superiours I attempt not to speak to, desiring rather to learn of them more of this nature, but) to you giue me leav to say: Let no man hereafter tel me I despair of excelling in the oratoricall faculty, therefore 'tis bootless to endeavour. Who more unlike to make an oratour than Demosthenes except it were one who had no tongue in his head? yet Demosthenes became orator optimus. Tell me not 'I have made trial once and again, but find my labour fruitless.' Thou art not the first that hast made an onset, and bin repelled; neither canst thou presage what renew'd endeavors may produce. Would you then obtain this skill? take Demosthenes his course; gird up your loines, put to your shoulders, and to it again, and again, and agen, let nothing discourage you. Know that to be a dunce, to be a stammerer, unable to bring forth three or four sentences hanging well together, this is an easy matter: but to become an able speaker, *hic labor, hoc opus est*. Would you haue your orations pleas, such as need not be laughts at? why follow him in that also. Let them be such as smell of the lamp, as was sayd of his. Not slovenly I mean, but elaborate, *diurnam industriam et nocturnis lucubrationibus elaboratæ*, such as savour, of some paines taken with them. A good oration is not made at the first thought, nor scarce at the first writing over. Nor is true Eloquence wont to hurry it out thick and threefould, as if each word: were running for a wadger: nor yet to mutter or whisper it out of a book after a dreaming manner, with such a voyce as the oratour can scantly heare himself speak; but to utter it with lively affection, to pronounce it distinctly with audible voyce.

But I shall burden your patience no further at the present. Those and the like vices in declaiming that are contrary to Eloquence, were the chief motives that drew me first into thoughts of this discourse. But I see I cannot reach at this season to speak of them particularly. wherefore with your good leav and gods assistance I shall rather treat of them at another opportunity. . . .

Surely few students could have resisted such an appeal to burn the midnight candle in search of *le mot juste* and the apposite apophthegm. Noteworthy is the secular character of pious Michael's plea. Nowhere does he mention the pulpit eloquence as the main end of oratory; he might have been addressing an assembly of budding politicians or barristers.