

**EVOLUTION OF
EXPRESSION. IN FOUR
VOLUMES. VOLUME I**

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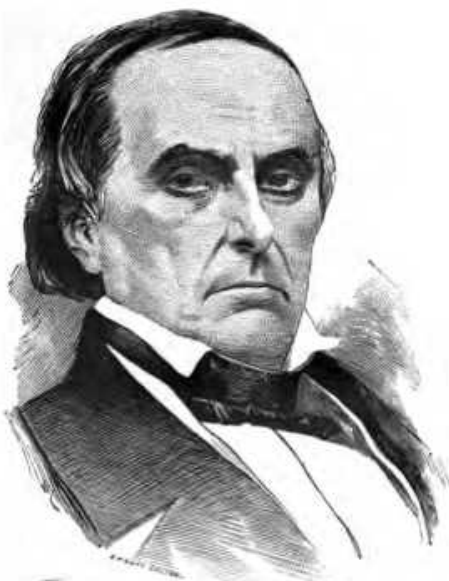
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EMERSON COLLEGE

**EVOLUTION OF
EXPRESSION. IN FOUR
VOLUMES. VOLUME I**



DANIEL WEBSTER.

Emerson College, Boston.

EVOLUTION OF EXPRESSION.

BY

EMERSON COLLEGE OF ORATORY.

A COMPILATION OF SELECTIONS ILLUSTRATING THE
FOUR STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN ART
AS APPLIED TO ORATORY.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

FIFTH EDITION.



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INTRODUCTION.

A KEY TO THE HEADINGS OF THE CHAPTERS.

"The individual repeats in himself the history of the race."

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

The tendency of modern education is toward the discovery and perfection of methods. The thought of leading educators is turned from the *what* to the *how*; to development of systems of progressive steps through which the pupil may be led to a realization of the criterion of the teacher. This trend is best shown in the multiplicity and excellence of recent pedagogical treatises and in the appearance of carefully graded and progressive textbooks. The ancients believed that their heroes were born of gods and goddesses. They knew of no means by which the mind could be developed to the compass of greatness. The ancient theory to account for greatness was preternatural birth; the modern theory is evolution. To-day, the interest of the child is awakened, his mind is aroused, and then led onward in regular steps.

The study of all forms of art, so far as methods are concerned, should be progressive.

The volumes of this series are an attempt to put the study of elocution and oratory upon this methodical basis. For correct guidance in our search for the best methods, we must understand the order of the development of the human mind. A child, before he arrives at an age where he can be definitely taught, is simply a little palpitating mass of animation. Soon he begins to show an attraction toward all surrounding objects. Next he begins to show a greater attraction for some things than for others. His hands clutch at and retain certain objects. He now enters the period of development where he makes selections, and thus is born the power of choice. Objects which, at first, appeared to him as a mass, now begin to stand out clearly one from another, to become more and more differentiated, while the child begins to separate and to compare. Thus the brain of the child passes through the

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successive stages from simple animation to attraction, to selection or choice, to separation or analysis. This principle of evolution, operating along the same lines is found in the race as in the individual. In all man's work he has but recorded his own life or evolution. All history, all religions, all governments, all forms of art, bring their testimony to this truth, and in each the scholar may find these successive stages of development.

In the age of Phidias the art of sculpture reached its maturity. No race and no people have ever surpassed the consummate achievements of that period. But this perfection was the result of a process of evolution. There had been graduated steps, and those same steps must today be taken in the education of the artist. Art had passed into its second period before authentic Greek history began. The first stage was shown in that nation so justly called the "Mother of Arts and Sciences." In Egypt we find probably the first real manifestations of mind in art forms. They are colossal exhibitions of energy, such as the Temple of Thebes, seven hundred feet in length, statues seventy feet tall, monuments rearing their heads almost five hundred feet in air,

" Those temples, palaces and piles stupendous,
Of which the very ruins are tremendous."

To Assyria we turn in our search for the next step in the progress of art. Here we find the artists making melodramatic efforts to attract the attention and fascinate the mind with weird and incongruous shapes of mongrel brutes and hydra-headed monsters.

Finding art at this point, the Greeks, true to their race instinct, at once began to evolve from it higher forms. They soon awoke to the perception that beauty itself is the true principle of fascination. Reducing their new theory to practice, the Greek artists turned their attention to perfecting the details of the art they had borrowed. To works originally repellant from their very crudeness, they supplied finish and perfection of the parts. The ideal was still before them; the grotesque monsters might fascinate the beholder, but, however skillfully executed, however perfected in finish, the impression produced was but transitory, and failed to satisfy the craving of the soul. Beauty was found to be the only abiding source of satisfaction. As the conceptions of the past no longer satisfied the criterion which their own minds had embraced, the Greek artists sought in Nature herself for models of that beauty, which, when placed in art forms, should be a joy forever. The monsters of antiquity disappeared, and, in their places, came attempts to faithfully copy nature. To be sure, some specimens of the art era from which the Greeks had just emerged, appeared at much later periods of their history; but these creations, as in the case of the Centaur, were usually representations of what were believed to be historical facts, rather than fan-

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tastic creations designed by the artist to startle the beholder. The Greek still gratified his passion for beauty of detail, while he was pursuing his new-born purpose of copying Nature. It was not long before he found that Nature, however skillfully copied, could be perfectly mirrored to the eye of the beholder, only when presented as she appears to the *mind* of man. This discovery budded and blossomed into the consummate flower of true art, the fourth or suggestive era, which reached its acme in the work of Phidias and his contemporaries. Every creation was the expression of some state of mind. Everything was made as it appeared to the eye of the poet, not as it might seem to the man of no sentiment. The impression of the poetic mind found its expression in art, and now the statues think, fear, hate, love!

The same general laws which have governed the rise of sculpture, underly the evolution of all forms of art. It is the purpose of the present writing to hint at, rather than to trace, the four stages of development in painting, music and literature. To follow the steps of progress in painting is somewhat more difficult than to trace the evolution of sculpture or architecture, on account of the perishable nature of the materials. Music has unfolded with the unfolding of the human mind, from the startling sounds of the savage,—exhibitions of pure energy,—through efforts at fascination by the medium of weird and unnatural combinations, and through attempts to reproduce natural sounds, ever upward till it breathes the very spirit of nature in a Haydn or a Beethoven.

We may follow the growth of the English drama through the same process, from its dawning in the fantastic miracle plays with their paraphernalia of heaven and hell, of gods, devils, angels and demons, to the creations of "the thousand-souled Shakespeare." In religion we see the same phases—from the worship of life itself, of natural phenomena, through the panorama of deities friendly and deities unfriendly, of gods many and of devils many, until the human mind grasps the conception of Unity in deity, and bows in worship before an Infinite Being of Love and Providence.

In the history of government is written the same tale of evolution, from manifestations of brute energy, seeking gratification, in subjugation for its own sake,—from the government typified by the iron heel, to the government which, seeking the education and protection of all the people, becomes a school, rather than a system of restraint.

Therefore the race, in its march from savagery to civilisation, may be considered as one man, showing, first, animation, next, manifesting his objects of attraction, third, displaying his purposes, and finally putting forth his wisdom in obedience to the true, the beautiful and the good.

These principles of natural evolution have been applied by the writer to the