

The Speaking Voice. By KATHERINE JEWELL EVERTS. New York: Harper & Bros., 1908. Pp. x+218. \$1.00.

Miss Everts says in her introduction:

Next to that primary instinct, the instinct for self-preservation, the strongest instinct of the human heart is for self-expression. The failure of society to provide simple and natural means of self-preservation has led to the American anarchist. The failure of education to provide for the training of the simple and natural means of self-expression has led to the American voice. We cram the student's mind with a knowledge of beauty and truth, but do not free the channels of communication and expression through which, in the act of sharing the knowledge he has acquired, the student assimilates and recreates that beauty and truth and finds it a vital force in his soul life and a vital index of his culture. . . . Our first step then is to tune the instrument; to put the voice in proper condition for use; to learn to support, free, and re-enforce the tone which is to be converted later, not into slovenly, careless gossip, but into beautiful and effective speech.

Evidently a book undertaken in this spirit, by one who is herself a most accomplished actress and a master of the art of speaking which she here undertakes to present, has something of interest for the sociologist. The ultimate practical object of sociology is control, and speech is perhaps the most important medium through which control is secured. Words represent the whole of our cultural and mental life, and through the spoken word or the printed page we transfer to the child and to society all that life is and all that we wish it to become. The use of speech is in a real sense our method of creating the mind, for certainly the human mind in its actual condition would not exist without this aid. And certainly we have to value every effort to make speech a more effective instrument of social control.

This volume of Miss Everts is to be commended from every standpoint. It is not a technical treatment of the anatomy and physiology of the voice and has none of the tediousness and impracticability of such treatises. The whole presentation is made in admirable literary style, and this, together with the excellent judgment shown in the selection (in Part III) of the materials to be used in practice, makes a volume of interest even to those not primarily interested in the cultivation of the voice.

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