

MISCELLANIES;

CHIEFLY

ADDRESSES,

ACADEMICAL AND HISTORICAL.

BY

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ELOCUTION,

AS A PART OF GENERAL EDUCATION.

THE English nation is not at all disposed to undervalue cultivation of the voice and ear in Singing and Music. Especially for Ladies these are felt to be elegant accomplishments. Yet it cannot be denied, that Elocution, as a general training, has been exceedingly neglected among us. If any one has a special impediment in speech,—a tendency to stutter, or some unpleasant lisp, then (it is admitted) an Elocution-master may be called in. And if but few appreciate systematic teaching as beneficial to mere utterance, still fewer understand how Elocution bears on the understanding and on the sentiments; how it exacts a perception of syntax, and opens the full meaning of poetry. The sound Elocutionist is, in my belief, by far the best and truest expositor and lecturer upon our native literature. These topics will give me large matter for my present address.

It may be well first to advert to two prejudices which are current, disparaging to elocutionary teaching. First, it is said, that Nature is a sufficient, and the best guide. Next, that the study of elocution makes people theatrical and affected. I shall treat these objections consecutively. They are met on the surface of society too often to admit of my neglecting or dissembling them.

First, those who maintain that we have only to abandon ourselves to NATURE and all will go right, cannot deliberately intend to lay this down as a universal, nor even as a general truth. Listen to the speech of an uneducated peasant. Does he, or does he not, speak "naturally?" Certainly neither his utterance of syllables and elementary sounds, nor the intonations of his voice, are exactly what you would wish to hear from your sons and daughters. Nature in each individual is not always perfect, but is often directly the opposite. We have our natural foibles, our peculiarities, of which it is desirable to get rid: moreover if one boy have a peculiarity very marked, he perhaps becomes unawares Elocution-master to a whole troop of play-fellows; so that, first in one village, next in a whole district, a local trick of utterance is propagated. We all know, that of mere vowels and consonants there is in each nation a definite sound, which is received as that of the most cultivated and refined society: words also are understood to be made up of these, with the accent on a definite syllable. Therefore, neither do we approve of giving to English vowels French sounds, nor of pronouncing a word with a wrong English vowel, as *pisantry* for *peasantry*. In maintaining that Nature suffices for good elocution, people really mean that those who have been brought up in what is called "good society" learn from that society the pure sounds of our language. This must be entirely admitted. Educated parents and other elder kinsfolk, are themselves the best of all primary teachers; and of course, we do not calculate on hearing from the lips of the gentry the coarse or inaccurate sounds of provincial rustics. Not but that the study and analysis of the rustic sounds has its instruction. From some we hear foreign vowels, and in the brogue foreign consonants: but (as a general remark) in nearly all there is something *superfluous*. If in sport we imitate the speech of another, or, as it is called, "take him off," we do this by marking and perhaps slightly exaggerating every peculiarity; just as in

caricature an artist gives prominence to every feature which deviates from the standard. A peasant adds to his vowels some note of emotion when no emotion is intended, or some musical circumflex when nothing in the grammar requires it. General Uncouthness is the result of all emphasis out of place. In refined persons and in the more refined sex the very opposite fault is to be expected, namely, that Tameness which results from timidity and from the absence of emphasis. Nevertheless, it is not much to concede, that, so far as *conversation* is concerned, few ladies who have been reared in refined circles need training in elocution:—if *this* be what is meant by the sufficiency of Nature. Reading, not conversation, is the trying test; and in the case of men, we might add, public speaking. In addressing a vast crowd, nearly every thing has to be sacrificed to the single effort of being audible. With this I have at present no further concern than to observe, that great accuracy and clearness in the articulation of consonants will often make up for deficiency in the volume of voice; and that even here a judicious teacher may certainly give to a speaker much aid. How the Elocutionist develops in his pupil a due understanding and feeling of Literature, will be presently set forth.

I pass to the second objection or prejudice, which is sometimes stated in this form; that, in expressing sentiment and emotion, Nature herself will supply the appropriate modifications of utterance; but that if we study them, it makes us THEATRICAL and affected.—True, as regards our own daily emotions; but how does this apply to reading? By reading what another has written or said, we do not forthwith put on his actual feelings; we do not get his heart inside us. In imitating what we suppose him to have felt, we are of course liable to over-act as well as to fall short. *Hypocrisy* in Greek meant *oratorical delivery*; good reading is in some sense the acting of a part, an imitation, a hypocrisy. If we will *not* act a part, our reading is wooden, tame or otherwise disagree-

able ; but of course we may act it badly, and a teacher may teach badly. To read theatrically would assuredly be a fault. It would also be a fault to dance across a drawing room instead of walking : but if ladies, from being taught to dance, fell into this fault, we should impute it to bad taste, or to want of judgment in their teachers.

What is meant by being "theatrical?" Two stages of contrast exist, and ought to exist, between the recitation suited to a chamber and that which is adopted in a theatre. *First* ; in a very large room and numerous audience, whose heads break the wave of sound and set it straying in cross eddies, all the secondary tones of voice need to be somewhat louder and more marked. As scene-painting must be coarse and bold, so must recitation in the amphitheatre ; for, what is delicate is ill-discerned, and that is in general alone effective which is highly coloured. Not only must the general flood of voice be more copious, but the minor intonations must have more than proportionate energy. Thus grief is made deep grief, joy is rapturous joy, hope is thrilling hope, fear is trembling fear, and so on : moreover, the art of the dramatist throws in, between, some tame or silly buffoonery to relieve (I suppose) the tension of the nearer part of the audience, who might be worn out by too continuous a spasm of emotion. Whether all this is high art or a deprivation of art, it does not belong to me to discuss ; but certainly it is to this that huge theatres lead. Amid the buzz to be ordinarily expected from a vast audience, and the broken surfaces on which the voice falls, the cultivation of delicacy is difficult, and is ill repaid. Thus theatrical utterance is not a mere magnifying of common speech, but contains a peculiar magnifying of its modifications, and of every thing emotional. It may therefore be compared, not so much to the view of a human face seen through a common magnifying lens, as to the view given by one which at the same time exaggerates the distinctive features. In short, it is in some sense a caricature ; just as is the old Epic poetry, where all passions

and powers are greater than in nature.—But *besides*, there is such a thing as the moderated or private theatrical style. In it, no great volume of voice is needed, and no exaggeration ought to be admitted: nevertheless it differs from simple reading. For by the number of actors, by the continuity of representation, and by the consistency of the assumed characters,—not to speak of dress and scenes,—the imagination of both speaker and hearer is far more keenly excited than by an ordinary reader, or than by the speaker of a single speech, unsupported by circumstantials. The actor throws himself into the assumed personality with more self-abandonment: completer imitation is attempted; and the hearers, wound up by preparation, follow with intenser sympathy. Hence we accept with pleasure expressions of passion, which would be too deep for our ordinary unprepared mood. As it is proverbial that the sublime is but a step from the ridiculous; as bombast and rant are a staple of the farce writer; so in common reading too much *pathos* becomes *bathos*, and offends.

All this may be frankly admitted, nay, strongly insisted upon, without at all admitting that even exercises purely theatrical tend generally to theatrical reading or speaking. It would be as just to say that dancing tends generally to fantastic walking. The individual, not the art, must be in such case blamed. Indeed, I have been assured by one who made practical elocution the business of his life,—to whose teaching I was much indebted in my school-boy days,—that in a vast majority of cases the great difficulty is to induce the pupil to imitate and reproduce *strongly enough* the sounds uttered by the master. He said, that unless the master's tones are somewhat overdone at first,—that is, somewhat theatrical,—many pupils do not hear and understand them. That this is true, I do not dare to assert: but I can believe, that the case of the Elocutionist is similar to that of the Writing Master. If a parent remonstrated against his daughter being taught to write text hand,—said it was too masculine, and that he wished for more delicate and fluent writing; it would be

replied, that the object of the magnified hand is to cultivate the eye into an accurate idea of the forms to be aimed at. The practice may easily be overdone : yet the principle is reasonable. I have heard it said, that artists never more successfully strike off in few lines the likeness of a human countenance, than when they have first learned to draw a caricature of it. For, a caricature exaggerates every peculiarity, and one who knows what these are, has afterwards only to soften,—to subdue,—and he gets the effective likeness, no longer extravagant. Taste, which adds the final perfection to works of art, is not a creative, so much as a repressive and retrenching faculty. In the history, alike of individual minds, and of Art in general, including poetry, the Creative and Shaping power must come first, and is comparatively rugged, massive, perhaps extravagant ; afterwards follows the Taste which sobers, chastises, refines. If it be clearly understood that the pupil shall not be left in the first stage,—just as in writing he must not stick in large text ; but, on whatever scale he begin, he must soon come down to small hand and end in running hand,—the teacher of Elocution must be allowed to take his own course with beginners, and must not be put into trammels by our fear and dislike of theatrical utterances.

But what is it that he has to teach ? His subject has four different heads, of which the first and most necessary is in many cases achieved without him. It is, *Articulation* ; or the expressing of single words, as they might be read in a dictionary, with the pure and true sounds. The children of the gentry, especially young ladies who have been taught at home, have seldom much to blame in their speech. Special impediments and inaccuracies are exceptional. Nevertheless, very few boys, and (I presume) still fewer girls open their lips as widely as they ought, if they are to be heard distinctly. A certain laziness leads very many to allow their lips to intercept the voice, with the result of mumbling and confusion of sound. The lips must necessarily close momentarily or the teeth come

down on the lower lip, to sound the lip-letters, (the *labials*, b p f v,) but in the intervals the mouth should be kept well open; and a volume of sound proportional to the apartment should be sustained. Again, to get power for this, breath must be taken fully at each critical division of a sentence. These are perhaps the chief matters, under the head of *Articulation*, which are needed ordinarily in a class of the best selected pupils. Nevertheless it is generally instructive to go into the various systems of consonants and of vowels, beyond anything that is contained in the grammar of a single language, since it is by contrast that sounds (as all other things) are best understood. It is well for the pupils' ear to appreciate exactly the errors of provincial vowels, the difference of French and English a, u, o, t, d, r; the different lisps of r, the essential character of the consonantal brogue in Ireland, as well as the organic actions which distinguish English t, French t, English th and Irish or Oriental t. All such practice conduces to accurate and easy enunciation.

The four heads of Elocutionary teaching may be denoted as Articulation, Inflexion, Intonation and Rhythm; and I must dwell further on the three last. *Inflexion* is the musical sliding of the voice up or down, as when one sounds a violin string with the bow, and simultaneously runs the finger of the left hand up or down, pressing the string against the finger-board. The interval through which the note uttered by the voice rises or falls, depends on the state of emotion. In joy (for instance) in acute grief, and in anger, the rise or fall is greater than in tranquil speech; while in melancholy it is smaller, and something of monotony is felt. But whether the voice is to rise or to fall, depends upon the *grammar* of the sentence; in fact, Inflexion may be called a grammatical index. We cannot fail to note at least *four* inflexions; the extreme rising, the extreme falling, the middle falling, and the middle rising: besides which, there are *circumflexes* of the voice, in which rise and fall are combined. The extreme

inflexions are best heard in a question which puts an alternative: as: "Is it light? or dark?" Here, without affectation the rise may be strongly marked, even without emotion. The sound is best heard, when prolonged upon a final vowel. "Is it *néw?* or old?" The voice upon an ordinary nominative before a verb is simply sustained; but when a nominative is composed of a long phrase, with a slight pause at the end before the verb, the extreme rising inflexion at the pause marks the completion of the complex nominative: and similarly at the close of a hypothesis, just before what grammarians call the *apodosis*.—When a sentence is broken into two, with the former part complete in grammar, yet in thought incomplete without the latter,—the former seems naturally with us to end in the *middle* falling or half-falling inflexion; while the penultimate inflexion is the middle or half-rising, preparing the mind for the close. The following sentence may exhibit all four inflexions, if it be understood as completing all that we are urging,—

"When the Romans were poor, (1) they robbed mankind (2): but when they became rich (3), they slew one another (4)."

Here (1) marks the extreme rising inflexion, as appropriate to *poor*; (2) marks the middle falling, on the syllable—*kind*; (3) marks the middle rising, on *rich*; and (4) denotes the extreme falling. As a second illustration of the four inflexions, I give the following; although it is not essential so to read the sentence.

"Men's evil (1) manners live in brass (2): their virtues (3) we write in water (4)."

It would not be natural to give the middle rising inflection to *virtues*, unless we intended a final close to the train of thought with the word *water*. Once more; I take a passage of acute grief, in which the rise of inflection is extreme.

Oh Cromwell Cromwell!

Had I but serv'd my Góð (1) with half the zeal

I serv'd my kíng (1), Hé (1) would not in my age (4)

Have left me naked to my ènemies (3).

But, I must now add, no nation can on these matters lay down the law to other nations. As far as I can learn and discover, the French differ decidedly from the English, and the Scotch have a peculiarity of their own, which laughs to scorn all our rules. A few words on this topic are essential. In English, each word has an accent of its own, fixed on one syllable; and it seems to us to consist in a *stress*, not in musical elevation, except in regard to certain words called Interrogative. Perhaps in all there is really some elevation, though we are hardly aware of it; but the elevation of note accompanying our accent is certainly less than in Greek or Italian. But the Scotch just reverse the rule, and *depress* the musical note of the accented syllable; whence the strange waving sound which we call *sing-song* in the Scotch. Such a phenomenon brings into strong light the impossibility of appealing to "Nature" for the decision of controversies concerning speech. We must confine ourselves within the limits of English, and within them study what best harmonizes with its own analogies, and at the same time best brings out the sense. We ourselves have anomalies of principle. Thus, when a question is asked by means of an interrogative particle, we drop the voice at the end; but if the question be asked by a verb without a particle, (in which case the reply is necessarily either Yes or No,) we raise the voice ordinarily to its extreme pitch. Nevertheless in Latin, Greek and some other tongues, an interrogative particle is added in the latter case also. It is possible, that we regard every such question as mutilated, being only the first part of an alternative. Thus: "Is he coming? (*or not?*)"—When the portion, *or not?* is suppressed, the inflexion preceding it retains still the extreme rising inflexion. Nevertheless, this suffices to suggest that different nations might decide on a different practice. Indeed we ourselves, if a question has to be repeated, drop the voice, as if in token of impatience, and as though we added; "Tell me;" *imperatively*.

The *circumflex* is common in lively, vehement or unrestrained utterance, but nearly vanishes in a subdued or diplomatic style. To speak of it vaguely,—it adds to the intensity of emphasis, and can generally be superseded by inserting particles. Thus: “Sell my field to *you*? I would not sell it to the *king*.” Here a wave of the voice is admissible on each of the emphatic words, each wave being a circumflex, but of opposite kind. We may paraphrase the sentence into a less familiar form: thus: “Shall I sell my field to *one who has so little pretensions as you*? I would not sell it *even* to the king.” Circumflexes are then no longer needed. And so much may here suffice to say about them.

It will be seen from what has been said, that Grammar is generally that which decides the right inflexion. But Grammar must be understood to include something of Rhetoric, as well as of Logic. When a grammarian composes a periodic sentence, he is ordinarily supposed to know from beginning to end the form which it is to take, and how much it is to include. This may be called the Logical view. But in fact, it most often happens in speech that we begin, not knowing how we shall end; and we pile up, as we proceed, fresh clauses which had not been fore-intended. This being so natural and common, it is often best to read a sentence as on this hypothesis, which may be called that of Rhetoric. When a series of words in apposition occurs, there may be several different ways of reading them, none of which can be called wrong, though one way may be too artificial, another decidedly the most natural. If I wish to recount 3, 4, 5 or more objects, and know from the beginning the exact number, I shall probably put the particle *and* before the last, and sustain the voice until I come to the last, which will then have a falling inflection, if it end the sentence or complete the thought. Thus: “I had in my pocket a clásp knife, a piece of córd and a sailor’s neédle-case.” But if the series of things is not completely remembered from the first, the voice drops on each if the sense be complete. For example, let me

take CLARENCE'S imperfect enumeration of the things seen in his dream.

I thought I saw a thousand fearful wrécks,
 A thousand mèn, that fishes gnàw'd upon ;
 Wedges of göld, great ànchors, heaps of pèarl,
 Inestimable stònes, unvalued jèwels.

In this pronunciation, (the voice dropping where the grave accent is marked,) it is assumed that the speaker felt his thought completed at *wrecks*, and again at *men*; then, as after-thought, added a description of *men*. But the voice will be sustained on *men*, if from the first mention of a *thousand* he intends and foreknows the whole line. Again, the three last clauses are not coördinate and descriptive of different things, but the *pearls* are species, the *stones* and *jewels* are genus, containing the pearls as a part. Evidently then the two last clauses are after-thought, being attempts to say the thing better: hence the voice must drop. But it might be sustained on the words *gold* and *anchors*, if at the beginning of that line the speaker already had in his mind the three sets of objects which the line enumerates, and conceived of them as making up a whole. In this way the same passage often admits of several ways of reading it; yet one, perhaps, most to be approved. The same holds as to *emphasis*, which, as it were, stands between my second head, *Inflexion*, and my third, *Intonation*. In part through the defect of our language or want of skill in using it, mere grammar fails to show which word in a sentence is emphatic. Latin, and still more completely Greek, may denote the emphatic word by a light particle, or by the arrangement of words. Our particles are too heavy, and generally prosaic, or the exigencies of metre throw words into a wrong order. Hence it is often an open question with a reciter, what is the best mode of emphasis. Sometimes indeed he prefers to sacrifice in it the guidance of metrical accent. These remarks will show how much there may be to study in detail.

But we are led on to the third head, which I called *Intonation*. It carries us beyond mere grammar, into the sphere of emotion, and peculiarly affects the vowels. It may also give a certain spasmodic force to consonants. Every vowel, without losing its own nature, or its fundamental peculiarity as English, admits many modes of utterance suited to different states of feeling, besides that tremulousness which weakness, old age, grief, or a conflict of several emotions may cause. Those who have never looked closely into the subject will yet easily convince themselves of this, by considering how differently they utter the interjection *oh!* under different passions,—fear, surprize, admiration, pain, longing desire, pity, tender remembrance, or pleasure at some little discovery. Fear, surprize and pain need no literary illustration. But I may select a few examples of other sentiment.

Oh glorious sight! *oh* mighty day to come! (*admiration*)

Oh for a lodge in some vast wilderness! (*desire*)

Oh pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth! (*compassion*)

Oh then, I see, queen Mab has been with you. (*playful pleasure*)

The vowel *o* admits all the same varieties of sound, when it is in the middle of a word; and the same is true of other long vowels, *e*, *a*, *i*, *oo*. A short vowel passes so quickly, that it has fewer modifications. It is even possible to graduate intensity of the same feeling on the same vowel, in a sort of climax. Thus, with the long *e* sound in *dear*.

Dear lost companions of my tuneful art,

Dear as the light that visits these sad eyes;

Dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart:

Ye died amid your dying country's cries.

Tender feeling is generally in a tenor voice; when it deepens into grief or mingles with indignation it descends into a bass, or culminates into a high note. Here *Ye* and *Died* admit of a powerful circumflex.

It is not a mere fantasy to compare the sounds of the vowels under strong emotion to geometrical forms. In abrupt

command, pride and self-assertion, a vowel (such as the pronoun *I*) ends abruptly and square, perhaps explosively; while in tenderness it tapers off gradually and is elongated: in hope it swells into greater fulness than at the origin, but continues smooth to the end: while in harsher passion the sounds are grating or tremulous, and have less purity. Practice in many such forms of expression not only enables a person to put forth the utterances of passion, on occasion; but, what is far more to be desired, it implants so keen a sense of what they mean, as to conduce to an avoidance of them, when they are not wanted. The rustic, as I said above, clogs his enunciation with a disagreeable superfluity of intonations which have no meaning whatever. To polish these away leaves the effigy of our speech well shapen and smooth, with nothing that can be caricatured.

It is impossible to *describe* with full accuracy, and for any valuable purpose, the various intonation which passion gives to speech. It must be learned, partly by hearing it from the lips of a teacher, partly by our inward sympathy. Duly to excite this, the mind needs to be somewhat wound up; hence a reading somewhat continuous is in general needed, before the learner can throw his heart into the feeling of the subject. It may be added, that, by reason of the soul's unity, our whole person can scarcely help moving in harmony with the assumed sentiment. The effort of Imagination will hardly succeed, unless we allow all the parts of human nature to move together. If it be possible, yet it is difficult, to give to the voice the tones of compassion and tenderness, and not assume also the countenance of compassion and tenderness. If the voice is rightly to imitate fixed determination, so perhaps must the eye and the other features. Up to this point, it must be confessed, that the study of elocution is theatrical. Nay, to the beginner the stronger imitation may be easier than the weaker, if no sufficient excitement of the imagination be gained from more delicate expression: or, to

put it otherwise, possibly a stronger development of the passions in a *teacher* may usefully wind up the imagination of the *pupil* to a milder expression of the same.

After Articulation, Inflexion and Intonation, it remains to speak of Rhythm. There ought to be some rhythm, even in prose. Prose is so often ill-written, that, to read it, is peculiarly difficult. Talk is natural, prose is artificial. A periodical style may be, and often is, painfully long-winded and complex. When parentheses intervene, it is often difficult to sustain the connexion of the parts; moreover the proper emphasis is often not discerned until too late. A style too short or too devoid of periods, is apt to be disagreeably monotonous, like a modern street of dwelling houses. If the structure of several sentences in succession, all short, be cast on the same mould, it is very hard by any skill of reading to avoid unpleasantness. The same is true of Poetry, if the divisions of the line, called Cæsuras, are too little varied. A wooden hurdy-gurdy jingle will then follow, unless varied emotion redeem it from this ugly fault. But in general, Poetry has in its metre a better and more marked rhythm than Prose; and because it is in this respect more artificial still, more careful instruction will not be lavished on it in vain. To those who imagine that Nature without cultivation suffices for good reading, it may be proper to present the fact, that Nature does not suffice to decide whether poetry shall be *read* or *sung*. In the earliest development, when music and poetry were alike rudimentary, it would seem that the poetry was everywhere sung, as now among the musically-disposed Africans, and (I believe) among Arabs. But such music is very simple, and becomes a monotonous recitative, of which our ears are soon tired. Few persons will bestow more praise on it, than to say, that it is certainly better than the doggerel sing-song which the uneducated invent,—most naturally! The polished Greeks and Romans became so accustomed to a few recitatives, as to dispense with the aid of the lyre for them; but all the

newer and more complicated poetry was set to music, and their metres were determined by *musical time*. On the contrary, our metres are determined by the *prose-accent* of words, not by musical time at all : hence our metres are strictly *Oratorical*. Time with us plays a secondary part, but not to define the metre ; only to add fulness, smoothness, or force. The ancient Greeks totally neglected the prose-accent in their metres ; the Latins allowed to it a secondary influence, which grammarians disguise as a law of *cæsura*. When two different principles thus combine, taste and experience are exercised to blend them aright. An Englishman, in reading his native poetry, must bring out the law of the metre just clearly enough to catch the ear, but not so forcibly as either to be mechanical, or drown other qualities. To no small extent a good reader will cast a veil over a poet's bad execution : he may often disguise monotony, hurry over weakness or delicately assist it. When the metre (especially what is called *Anapæstic*) is too jumping, he may subdue it into steadiness and equability. If the matter have weight and the expression dignity, much may be done to redeem the imperfections of form : and such cares, towards the older, more rugged and negligent poetry, may be called filial *duteousness*, when the substantial merit deserves them. But, to attain any such skill in reading, is a cultivated art, and must not be ordinarily expected as a wild growth. In learning to play on a musical instrument, and even in singing, a pupil often is required to execute conjunctions of sound perhaps difficult, which have no beauty in themselves : yet by this exercise the *power* of delicate and prompt expression is gained. So in *Elocution* many utterances may be studied and practised which are not likely to be much used, if nevertheless they conduce to cultivation of the ear and command of the voice. Nay, dull pupils are sometimes wakened up, and lazy pupils abashed, by that which to *Elocution* is *Satire* ; I mean, by that out-and-out perversion of reading which turns faults to

ridicule. Thus to exhibit the absurdity of very monotonous reading, or of a wooden pomposity, a teacher may read the same piece with the humdrum tones of a schoolboy, and again with the sonorous recitation of a magistrate's clerk. After this, if he read it in the correct mode, the contrast brought out may cause it to be better appreciated by the untrained ear. To avoid encouraging that very evil taste and very easy trick of turning what is beautiful or noble into bombast, it may be safer to confine such ridiculous exhibitions to sentences of no intrinsic interest or value.

I hope it has been seen, in the above, how valuable a mental exercise is the practice of recitation. It will often happen that in the private reading of a piece of poetry,—say, a speech of tragedy or an elaborate ode,—a young person carries off but a tame and dry conception; but on hearing it powerfully read, finds that it has a depth of feeling and variety of allusion which had previously escaped notice. In order to read even with right inflexions, a sound understanding of the syntax is needed. This is something. But it is far more, to enter into the delicate shades of sentiment or deeper emotions, which lie beneath the letter, and are not really expressed on the page. No reading of poetry or of classically written prose conveys the whole sense to the hearer's heart, unless there is feeling in the utterance; and to be able readily to express the feeling of any proposed passage, is a high test of delicately cultivated sentiment. The Elocutionist is the best commentator on a noble literature; for he comments, not by dead notes written *about* the thing, but by bringing the thing *itself* into the hearer's mind and heart, by causing that heart to commune with and share the author's sentiment, and as it were weep or rejoice with him. Science may cultivate the Understanding and the power of pure Reason; but only literature, teeming with moral thought, can cultivate the Sentiment. To inculcate,—to preach,—is ordinarily of little avail; but utterances coming, as though

unawares, out of the heart find a way to the heart. That a pupil understands and feels what has been written, is in no way so well proved as by his reciting the words with judgment and feeling.

But let me not be supposed to think that *all* emotion alike deserves to be studied, contemplated, imitated and as it were blazoned out elaborately. On the contrary, to me the great depravation of Art seems to lie in lavishing it on unworthy subjects. Art ought to *select* what is beautiful or otherwise noble, not waste itself on the odious or worthless. The objection to what is called Theatrical, (against which I have hitherto contended as overstrained or out of place,) is sometimes only a less accurate phrase for objecting to harsh, fierce, envious, malicious, proud, revengeful or otherwise base emotions, as objects to be dwelt on closely, to be assumed in imagination, and expressed by the voice. Most of these are peculiarly odious from a female mouth; many of them, I am disposed to say, from any mouth; and at least they need to be severely kept down. The speeches of Satan in Milton are to my feeling a most painful subject for oratorical exercise. When detestable utterances cease to be a pain to us, they begin to deprave us. What motive can there be, adequate to justify dwelling on them and filling imagination and memory with them? Yet, excluding the fierce, the malicious, the coarse, and (what perhaps of all is worst) the voluptuous; we have abundant material for the oratorical exercise of either sex. Simple narrative, light and easy dialogue, the sweet, the pathetic, the complaining, the pitying, the mirthful, the congratulatory, the reproving or mild upbraiding, besides the virtuously indignant, the gravely tender, the solemn and the religious,—afford us surely sufficient exercise of Elocution. Perhaps even virtuous indignation should come forth with chastened tones from a woman's mouth: on that I will not dogmatize. But I insist, that indignation, virtuous scorn and hatred of evil furnish a complete exercise of all the harsher

and sterner tones, without putting into the lips of boy or girl any sentiment intrinsically hateful.

Under such limitations, with such precautions, I hold Elocution to be a valuable part of general Education. It remains only to say, that, like Vocal Music, it is peculiarly fitted for class-teaching. Pupils who are dull of ear, and do not at first learn well from the master, sometimes learn gradually from the recitations of other pupils and from the successive repetition. I therefore look with high hope to the ultimate success of this too much neglected accomplishment.