

this State were greatly interested in the improvement of the Erie Canal. Certain legislation was thought necessary. For this purpose they elected to the Assembly of this State a gentleman who, by his familiarity with the whole subject, was believed to be specially competent. No one knew so much about the Erie Canal as he, and therefore, surely, no one could speak so well upon that subject. At the appropriate time great expectations filled the Assembly Chamber with interested listeners. But when this unusually competent person, this specially qualified gentleman, this expert, rose to speak, he could say nothing! Inexpressibly embarrassed and annoyed, he made a complete failure. He had much to say, but he could not say it. He had never been trained in public speech. He found, with many others before and since his day, that knowledge and the power of expression are not coincident.

Neither does it follow that because we ourselves are excited emotionally we shall, therefore, excite similar emotions in those who read our words or listen to them. I knew two eminent preachers who, in preaching, often wept over their own words, while in their audience every eye was dry. None wept, and some smiled. These ministers were not hypocrites; they were very sincere men; but they had not learned how to raise their audiences to the same pitch of emotion with themselves. And as to "slavish imitation," if we are to shut up every school of rhetoric because of the danger of a slavish imitation, or lest the scholars may caricature the defects of their masters, then, for the same reason, let us silence every teacher of music and paralyze every master of drawing.

It is plain, therefore, that as to the utility of rhetorical training for the pulpit, much can be said on both sides. And yet I cannot doubt that one reason why many have not reached satisfactory conclusions upon our theme is, because, on one side too much is expected, and on the other too little is admitted to be possible. We do not bear in mind continually, as we should, the limitations and the possibilities of rhetorical training.

Take the process of invention. In the training of men to invent there are limitations, but there are possibilities. In the preparation for the immediate work of the pulpit, the first thing that calls for the preacher's earnest attention is the invention of his theme. Upon what subject shall I preach to my people on the next Sabbath? This question is continually asked. There is no end to it. Week after week the preacher must ask himself the same question. The same general theme is to be presented, the same gospel of Jesus. It is to be preached, but with endless variety. In this respect the office of the preacher, professionally considered, differs from that of every other vocation. To every lawyer his theme is given in the case to be tried by the jury or to be argued before the judges. To every physician his