

some results from the new experiment of dividing the Society into groups, each of which is expected to provide the programme for a particular evening ; and from what has been seen you are quite warranted in hoping that, by introducing a healthy emulation between these groups, and by giving as far as possible an equal share of work to each member, this arrangement will have the effect of stimulating all to greater activity in the affairs of the Society, and so of making this year one of unprecedented prosperity in its history. Leaving these introductory remarks we proceed at once to announce as the subject of our Inaugural Address—

LITERARY STYLE.

Several reasons might be assigned for selecting this theme. It would be a sufficient reason, even were there no others, to know that it has a most intimate bearing on our work as a Society, that in fact the acquirement of a good literary style is pre-eminently the object of our meetings. But, in addition to this, the subject is one of momentous interest to us in view of the profession to which we look forward, in which our success, humanly speaking, will depend not a little on our style. And then when we consider still further that style as such does not receive, even from literary and professional men, the attention which its importance as a condition of the effective communication of truth demands, there are in these considerations ample justification, we think, for the choice of this topic.

In dealing with the subject we shall refer first of all to some things which, though not bearing directly on style, are nevertheless pre-supposed by it and indispensable to its highest exercise.

It will be obvious to all that one pre-requisite for every artist is a thorough acquaintance with the materials he employs. The sculptor should understand well the marble he fashions, the painter the chemicals he uses, and the more complete their knowledge of these materials is, the more likely will they be able to effect satisfactorily the results at which they respectively aim. Now, the materials which the literary artist uses are words, and applying the principle stated to his case it involves this, that if his style in reading, writing or speaking is to be effective, it must be based on an accurate knowledge of the language he employs. He must understand its genius, its philology, the laws to which it is subject, and