

1. Nature is the true teacher, therefore "follow nature." In point of brevity, this oracle is admirable; but, in point of meaning—there's the rub. The benign goddess stands ready, it is said, to lead us into all the melody of modulated speech. Yet, she must be somewhat partial in the bestowment of her gifts; she reveals herself only to the favoured few, Mr. Parker being one of the elect; the thronging multitude of earnest teachers are *profani*, to whom she remains invisible, and whose heavy burden she never changes for her lighter yoke. Follow Nature. Yes, by all means. But what and where is Nature? Is she national, or provincial, or local? Is it English nature, or Scottish nature, or Irish nature, or American nature that is to be our guide? Or, again, is it nature in Yorkshire, or in Argyleshire, or in Tipperary, or in Massachusetts that is to fill us with all the music of phrase which should distinguish articulately speaking men? Perhaps Mr. Parker's ideal Nature—his guide to perfect utterance—is that which gives an inimitable drawl (only "Nature" can give it), to the following words:—

Neow is the winta uv eour discontent  
 Med glorious summa by this sun o' Yock,  
 An' all the cleouds that leowered upon eour  
 heouse  
 In the deep buzzum o' the oshin buried.  
 Neow air eour brews beound 'ith victor' us  
 wreaths;  
 Eour bruised arms hung up for monimunc; ;  
 Eour starn alarms chanj'ed to merry meet-  
 ins,  
 Eour drefle marches to delighfle masures.  
 Grim-visaged War heth smeuthed his wrin-  
 kled front,  
 An' neow, instid o' mountin' barebid steeds  
 To fright the souls o' ferfle edverseries,  
 He capers nimly in a lady's chamber,  
 To the lascivious pleasin' uv a loot.

This, this is nature! "What emphasis! What melody! What harmony! Should teaching ruin such voices?" By no means; we shall

not set the teacher so difficult a task; yet, it seems to us that even "deceitful man" may conceive and realize a higher idea of melody in speech than this,

"Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps."

2. There is, in fact, endless twaddle about Nature, and what she does and can do for man: Nature, the beneficent builder; man, the mischievous marplot; yet, if she does something for man, she expects him to do a great deal for himself. How great is nature, how insignificant is art! Not so. Each is great in its proper sphere. Art without nature? contemptible indeed. Nature without Art? see her handiwork in savage and in prehistoric man. Nature supplies the crude materials; Art—the product of intelligence and freedom—brings out of them the thing of beauty.

Whatever Nature may have been before the Fall, it is certain that since that catastrophe she needs most careful looking after. It may be true, as one has said, that *then* "man's faculties were quick and expedite; they answered without knocking, they were ready upon the first summons. An Aristotle is but the rubbish of an Adam, and Athens but the ruins of a Paradise." But it is clear that *now*

"Diseased nature oftentimes breaks forth in strange eruptions,"

and hence it needs all that the self-determining power of man can do in the way of physical culture, brain culture and heart culture, to control or counteract the freakish tendencies of diseased nature. It is a mere truism to say that every human faculty can be (and ought to be) improved by culture; and, notwithstanding the dogma of the immortal Dogberry—and the mortal Mr. Parker—that "to read comes by