

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XIX.—FEBRUARY, 1890.—NO. 2.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I. RHETORICAL TRAINING FOR THE PULPIT.

ITS LIMITATIONS AND ITS POSSIBILITIES.

BY PROF. A. J. UPSON, D.D.

THE public, and perhaps the ministry, are not unanimous on this subject. Some say such training does more harm than good. It destroys simplicity and sincerity. It fills a speaker with self-consciousness. It gives him the exaggerations of an actor. One so trained in his thinking becomes constrained in his thought. He is a slave chained to method, and sometimes a slave to one method only—to one master. All his addresses and sermons are planned in one way. He becomes, consciously or unconsciously, a slavish imitator. Inevitably he will caricature his teacher—that is, his style of thinking and writing and speaking will be an exaggeration of his master's faults.

An experienced minister, one who is described as a man distinguished for his learning and soundness of judgment, writes to a theological student: "You are to be eminently a public speaker. You ought to become a good one, of course. And yet, I have always been mortally prejudiced against the art of speaking as an art, and never paid any real attention to it, though in the Seminary I read and recited on the subject, as I was required to do. I believe it is natural for a man to speak well on any subject on which he is informed, and on which he feels." In the same spirit, the remark is yet common: "Be natural; that is all that you need." In plain words: "If you have anything to say, say it. In writing or speaking, your own style will be the best for you; and the less training you have, the more truly will it be your style."

Another has asked the question: "Where is the accomplished writer or speaker who consciously practices the rules he was taught? How many eloquent preachers can recite to you to-day any large portion of the lectures on homiletics to which they listened in their student life?" Besides, we are told that successful preachers them-