

power is humor ! Once make a man laugh, and he will listen to you and let you do what you please with him."

It cannot be questioned that it is not only legitimate but of imperative importance to every public speaker to be *en rapport* with his hearers. To please, to waken attention, to interest by surprise, by geniality, by relaxing solemn dignity, thawing coldness, by scintillations that pleasantly startle, many a hearer is won, just as by the indirect attack—the charge that springs from ambush and takes men off guard—many a battle is gained.

If one could read the barometer of each hearer's feeling, if he could see how many are there in a state of mind quite unfitting them for the message he has to deliver, he might realize the value of whatever would tone up the languid, placate the obstinate, cheer the depressed, conciliate the careworn and irritable, and, in a word, put them all in a genial, receptive, and responsive temper. Hence the introductory parts of a sermon are helped by a touch of wit and humor ere the preacher settles down to the heavier part of his work, and then, through the progress of it, the attention is often rallied when it would flag, intensity is relieved, severity is softened, and obscurity is brightened by well-directed wit. The most effective preachers are usually found to alternate wit and pathos, sometimes even blending the two, the one helping the other in general effect.

There are two classes of preachers to whom this suggestion will appear worthless. One is the cautious retailer of colorless axioms, a neutral and negative manikin of a preacher, such as the authors of the "Rejected Addresses" represent the poet Crabbe as voicing, when he says, "In the view of life and manners which I present, my clerical profession has taught me how extremely improper it would be by any allusion, however slight, to give any uneasiness, however trivial, to any individual, however foolish or wicked."

The other class Henry Ward Beecher pictures in that dogmatic and unskilled fisher of men who uses a cart rope for his line, baits with a solid chunk of Calvinism, and, slashing it vigorously into the water, shouts to the fish, "Bite or be damned !"

#### AN ELEMENT OF POWER.

The preacher gains power over men principally as he removes from the realm of the abstract and metaphysical into that of the concrete and familiar. His intimacy with actual human life, his insight and analysis of the working of human hearts, his sympathetic comprehension of human life in all its phases, its frailties, its pathos, its perplexities, its pride, its pauperism, its temptations, excuses, perverseness, susceptibilities to the worst and best things, is something which the seminary cannot give him. Hence men preach with abundance of divinity but not a shred of humanity. That is one reason there is so little humor and wit in their sermons ; for wit and humor are as much a part of genuine humanity as are the features