

too may be healed. I know whereof I speak, and it is with regret I say that, as a rule, even the young men and young women of our class-rooms do not display any adequate knowledge of their own glorious language. If this is the case with advanced students in advanced class-rooms, students who in their turn are about to become teachers; if the instrument by which the great work of education is to be perfected be itself imperfect, or its functions underestimated or not thoroughly known, what results can be hoped for but imperfection and possibly failure? It may be objected, I am aware, that there is such a thing as fastidiousness even in the matter of speech, and that one may be too particular even in regard to the use of words. Be it so. I only echo the sentiment of the refined and truly cultured, when I reiterate my opinion *that the correct use of the English language is the surest and indeed the only badge of thorough education.* The words are mine; but the truth is the truth, though I had never been. What becomes of the theory of gravitation in the mouth of a man who has no words, no fluency, no powers of vocal expression? If I, the intellectually hungry, ask a fish, do I not receive a stone? But with language comes power. It scales the heavens, permeates space, wrests the secret from the star, and lays it humbly at the feet of men; for thought is itself unspoken language, so the right utterance of the thought is not merely correct English, it is correct mathematics and correct logic and correct poetry; the language of Nature and the possible transmuted into the language of man and fact, these making Nature's knowledge his inalienable heritage also; his heritage and his birthright for ever.

I venture to say that the majority of our pupils, when once the school-room door has closed behind them

for the last time, seldom, if ever, open a euclid or solve an equation; but language, the great gift of Nature, the one means for the expression of Nature's wants and Nature's promptings, must of necessity be in constant requisition. How much better is a willing and esteemed servant than an arbitrary and ill-understood master. Language, our own language, should be that servant, for if it is not our slave, it will become our tyrant, domineering over us in high places, and trampling us in the gutters of derision beneath the mocking feet of our fellows' scorn. Step behind the scenes for a moment or, if opportunity forbid, accept my word that though the super-cultured of a community may openly ignore the critical teaching of the mother-tongue as something beneath them, and stake their all on the acquisition of an *ology* or a *cult*, their covert sneer is the first to greet a solecism, while a political theft is more condonable in their eyes than a grammatical impropriety. It is so in other lands. It must be so ere long in ours. Again it may be objected that the teacher's place is not in the circles of super-culture. I tell you the teacher's place is where he is best fitted to be. Must the teacher stand abashed before the chattering community, he who professes to hold the key of knowledge? Is his profession a sham that it should be mocked, or that he should be told: "Go down lower, this is no place for you, other and better are here, go to and learn ere you can become our teacher"? No. A thousand times I say no. Let the teacher arise and proclaim his place. This is the nineteenth century. The dark ages are behind us. Before us lies the future. Let the earnest soul rise and say, I too am an autocrat. The wealth of tuition is mine, past, present and to come, and I will mount to my place, though the way be blocked with