

some attention bestowed on the graces of language, and that in all communities that had made any progress in civilization, and in the arts, this branch of study, was diligently cultivated—more especially that it was of the utmost importance to young men devoting themselves to the study of the law—since it was by the power of using with force and elegance the English language that the Barrister, whether addressing a learned Judge or Jury, could rivet conviction on the understanding and heart. I noticed a popular imagination that only a few select spirits could succeed in these studies, and shewed that the ability of speaking, or of writing with force and fluency, was not so much derived from nature, in the vast majority of cases, as acquired by means of pains and study. I shewed, that by learning to compose with a measure of facility, we were taking the surest way to form in our minds those principles of criticism by which we shall be enabled to form a correct judgment of books and other writings—an object of no small importance, when the press teems with publications, and the good and the bad solicit public patronage with like importunity. I observed that there was an additional recommendation of these studies on this ground, that they formed a subject of innocent and agreeable relaxation to the mind—that in *particular* of fact the power of conveying our sentiments with force and eloquence, was an art which belonged to young men of all professions, seeing that any degree of proficiency therein brought along with it this farther recommendation, that it enabled us to think with accuracy—to transfuse into our own minds, and by reflection to make thoroughly our own, facts and opinions which we might have received in conversation or from books, and which otherwise would have soon faded from our remembrance.—I observed still farther, that it was an art not restricted to professional men, but belonged to all who had occasion to make statements in writing concerning matters of business, or even to maintain an epistolary correspondence with their friends. I noticed a device not unfrequently used to compensate the inability of composing—that of having recourse to printed forms of epistles which certain authors had published for the benefit of the uninstructed—and I pointed out the great imperfection of all such set forms of writing, seeing they were of necessity inapplicable to the precise business in hand, and unsuitable as expressions of our special sympathy and interest in the concerns of friends; that as there was usually a stiffness and formality about such productions, our correspondents would be prone either to form erroneous impressions of our feelings, or if they discovered the source from which we had borrowed our phraseology, would form a low estimate of our talents and education. In every way, therefore, both in writing letters of business or of friendship, it was of the utmost importance we should have a facility of using