

accommodate ourselves to this demand of nature. It has no identity—this choice of style—with the wisdom of words which the Apostle guards against when exposing a philosophy falsely so called. The best refutation of those who convert such Apostolic statements into an apology for a sluggish, or what is wrongly called a simple style, is in the example of the Apostle's own writing, which contains as happy instances of every rule of rhetoric as either Greek or Roman school would have exacted. It is quite an error to confound a chaste or ornate style with a high-flowing artificial style, or to hold the former unadapted to the common mind. There is no opposition between simplicity and elegance; simplicity may consist with sublimity and the loftiest flights of eloquence. But in order to be impressive, style must be pure, vivacious, vigorous—as Cicero puts it*—in distinction from what is coarse, dull, verbose, and unmusical. In the very common affairs of life, in mere ordinary communications, we see the effect of variety in the arrangement of words; how brevity and terseness shall sometimes fulfil the speaker's aim, and again a more copious diction. Look, (said Dr. Willis,) at the vivacity of the Psalmist's expressions—simple often—yet simple still when highly adorned. The very voices of nature on every side protest against the doctrine of a sluggish monotony, whether in writing or speaking. Beauty, ornament, is a law of creation. It is an idea having its archetype in the Divine mind. The evening sky, with its variegated brilliancies—the landscape—the garden—with their variation of hill and dale, and colours of every hue—the tints and shades of an autumn foliage in every forest of this land; the rivers and streams appealing to ear as well as eye, in the varying grades of sound, from the scarce audible murmur of the gentle purling stream, to the roaring of Niagara; these voices of nature proclaim nature's abhorrence of drivelling, insipid sameness in the written or oral communing of mind with mind. The Creator himself adapts to the love of beauty.

Let me, by a rapid transition, pass to the essential or ornamental—it is both—in the enunciation of truth. Let not the lessons a just elocution prescribes be neglected,—the rules for delivery. The ornamental—nay, the essential in public speaking—includes an exact attention to decorum of manner, to rules of emphasis, and to variety in the time and measure of utterance analogous to the variety to be desiderated in written style. They who would say “Let every man, independently of rules, follow his nature,” forget that what is called by some the natural, is rather really the adventitious. Elocution seems to bring back to the natural from the artificial, or from modes of address which have been formed by imitation, upon models accidentally cast in the way of our boyhood. We have authority in the example of the renowned masters of eloquence for attention to manner in speech—to gesticulation—to say all in one word—to “action.” This was the first thing, the second, the third, recommended by the great Grecian orator, whose resistless eloquence “wielded at will that fierce democracy—

“Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece,
To Macedon, and Artaxerxes' throne.”

Towards the close of the lecture, Dr. Willis proceeded, as an analogous requisite, to urge what is becoming in general manners, in social intercourse, appealing to the Apostolic description of the charity which doth nothing unseemly; and to the requirement of whatsoever things are lovely as well

* “Omnium sententiarum gravitate, omnium verborum ponderibus est utendum. Accedat oportet actio varia, vehemens, plena animi, plena spiritus, plena doloris, plena veritatis.”—CICERO DE ORATORE.