

## II.—SHOULD THERE NOT BE A PROFESSOR OF ELOCUTION IN EVERY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY?

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IT never would have occurred to me to argue the question at the head of this article, had I not been requested to do so by the editor of THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. As the object of a Theological Seminary is to train preachers, it would seem to follow as a natural inference that some part of its training should be expended upon the voice that is to be used in preaching. The only escape from this inference lies in taking the ground that training of this kind is unnecessary. Some, I believe, actually do say this. As if high excellence in any sphere could be attained without persistent and intelligently directed labor, they tell us that the speaker, like the poet, "is born and not made"; but they overlook the fact, emphasized in the biography of every poet, that, if one "born" with poetic possibilities is ever to obtain sufficient command of the *technique* of his art to insure him reputation and influence, there is a very true sense in which he must also be "made." So with the speaker. From Demosthenes and Cicero down to Clay and Phillips, the testimony of those whom the world calls born orators is almost unanimous with reference to the necessity of training. Who, for instance, is *the* born orator of the American pulpit? Were the question to be submitted to the vote of the country, there is no doubt that, by an overwhelming majority, the answer would be, Henry Ward Beecher. Notice now to what, in his Yale Lectures, Mr. Beecher largely attributes his oratorical powers. "If you desire," he says, "to have your voice at its best and to make the best use of it, you must go into a drill which will become so familiar that it ceases to be a matter of thought and the voice takes care of itself. This ought to be done under the best instructors. . . . It was my good fortune in early academic life to fall into the hands of . . . Prof. Lovell . . . and for a period of three years I was drilled incessantly (you might not suspect it, but I was) in posturing, gesture and voice culture. . . . Afterwards, when going to the seminary, I carried the method of his instruction with me, as did others. We practiced a great deal on what was called 'Dr. Barber's system' . . . which was then in vogue, and particularly in developing the voice in its lower register, and also upon the explosive tones. There was a large grove lying between the seminary and my father's house, and it was the habit of my brother Charles and myself and one or two others to make the night and even the day hideous with our voices as we passed backward and forward through the woods exploding all the vowels. . . . The drill that I underwent produced not a rhetorical manner, but a flexible instrument that accommodated itself readily to every kind of thought and every shade of feeling, and obeyed the inward will in