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A PRAYER.

IMITATED FROM THE PERSIAN.

Robert Southey.

Lord! who art merciful as well as just,
Incline Thine ear to me, a child of dust!
Not what I would, O Lord! I offer unto Thee,
Alas! but what I can.

Father Almighty, who hast made me man,
And bide me look to heaven, for Thou art there,
Accept my sacrifice and humble prayer.
Four things which are not in Thy treasury,
I lay before Thee, Lord, with this petition;
My nothingness, my wants,
My sins, and my contrition.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF ELOCUTION AND ORATORY IN PHILADELPHIA.

IN America, at least, elocution may now be said to have a recognized place in the training of every minister. The day has gone by when it was thought enough that a man should have something to say, leaving him to say it as best he could. The results of that old-fashioned system were not very satisfactory. Sometimes, indeed, men appeared who, without training, had the natural gift of easy and effective delivery; but far more frequently the effect was marred sadly by poor articulation, monotonous sing-song, absurd inflections, or ungainly gestures. These were partially, but only partially, counteracted by the earnestness of the speakers, and it was little wonder the feeling by-and-by arose that something better than this might be attained by training, if it were only of the right kind. The truth came to be realized that delivery is a fine art like music or painting; and hence, while as in the case of other fine arts, some have a much greater aptitude for it than others, there was every probability that careful study and faithful practice would greatly benefit the most gifted, and, at least, save those more scantily endowed from their worst deformities. As the outcome of this feeling, no theological seminary now considers itself properly equipped without its instructor in the art of public delivery. This is certainly a great step in advance, and it is to be hoped nothing will ever be done to interfere with an arrangement so manifestly desirable, though there always has been and probably always will be difficulty in securing suitable specialists for this work.

It is, however, no disparagement to even the best teachers of elocution in our various colleges to say that there is yet much room for improvement in the results. This is not due to defects in their method at all, nor has there been any want of earnestness or enthusiasm on their part. But the time usually devoted to it is too short, and

there is too little honest practice on the part of the students to accomplish much real progress. At any rate, we have still far too few good readers and effective speakers, even among our younger ministers who have received the benefit of this training.

In the United States, where far more attention has been given to the subject than in Canada, the unsatisfactoriness of the existing condition of things has been felt for many years, and various suggestions have been made with a view to remedying it. The best organized and most hopeful effort hitherto has been the establishment of the National School of Elocution and Oratory in Philadelphia. This is a regularly chartered institution which has been in operation for about ten years. It has already turned out over four hundred graduates, and now has between two and three hundred students annually. These are of both sexes, and as it is the only institution of the kind on the Continent it draws them from all parts of the United States and Canada. The school has no endowment or public grant, and is, therefore, dependent upon fees for its support, but these are moderate and within the reach of most who care to avail themselves of its advantages. The full course in Elocution is a comparatively short one, consisting of two terms of about two months each. For the last two years the School has held a special summer session of six weeks in Cobourg, Ont., at the invitation of the authorities of Victoria University. This summer they propose having all their sessions in Philadelphia as previously; but there is little doubt that if sufficient encouragement were given them they would hereafter hold a summer session at some convenient place in Canada, or near the frontier.

The writer had the privilege of attending the classes during a portion of the last summer session in Cobourg, and can testify to the great benefit received, both in the matter of voice and of delivery. The special advantages which this School affords over other courses are thoroughness in teaching, and facilities for practice under the most favourable circumstances. One cannot help practising when the whole time is devoted to the study, and the minds of all around are filled with enthusiasm over it. Experience shows that sympathetic companions are necessary, and nowhere is one so sure of finding them as among the pupils of a school wholly engaged in the work. The whole atmosphere is artistic, full of keen, yet kindly criticism that almost unconsciously does its work. The instruction, moreover, is of the most thorough description. The curriculum embraces all the various departments of study that have a bearing on public delivery—voice cul-