

learned, but the advices you have received.—There is nothing more disappointing to a teacher than, after he has marked out the mistakes into which a student may have fallen, be it as to a matter of doctrine, or a matter of history, or a matter of philology, of grammar, nay, of pronunciation or orthography,—to find the same error repeated by the same party, as soon as the fresh occasion occurs; just as if the correction had never been made. I would say—not excepting the most unimportant of the subjects I have just named—you can hardly, in your recollections of the past session, do a more useful thing than to go over in your memory the instances in which you were guarded against any vice (I use the word in the philosophical not the moral meaning) in composition or method, and, if any rectification has been made on the margin of your essay, if the memorial of the error is recorded in your papers, do not look away from it, do not consign it to oblivion, but look at it rather till your mind has taken on the impress. Nor seek to efface the professorial nota, till you have first, with stern resolution, blotted out the fault; and I do not say vowed, but determined, at all costs, to amend and reform in that particular:—

Quintilio si quid recitares; Corrige, sodes,
Hoc aiebat et hoc: melius to posse negares
Bis torquo expertum frustra: delere jubebat,
Et male tornatos inculci reddere versus *

Horace speaks of poetry or verse-making and of a rigid critic's demands, but if, in such matters, the critic was so exacting of labour, how little should we grudge the needful application in seeking what is correct in far graver affairs. Again:—

Qui studet optatam cursu contingere metam
Multa tulit fecitque puer, sudavit et alsit.†

I feel that it is necessary still to call for much attention to the preliminary subjects of study as well as to those which are strictly theological. In this I know I speak the earnest wish of all your Teachers, and especially of my respected friend, Professor Esson, whose absence owing to sickness, I have to regret. Most of you had the opportunity of listening, the other day—to-day also, indeed—to the *fino maxim* of Augustine, that learning should be consecrated to religion, as the spoils of Egypt were to the God of Israel. And admitting, he justly says, that much was vain in the philosophy of the ancients, and deceptive in the arts of their sophists; yet hesitate not to enrich yourselves with what is good and useful: nor let truth be at a disadvantage with error, by your neglecting those rhetorical rules which they have too often converted to the service of a bad cause, but by which it becomes the advocate of

truth to set forth the latter in a manner fitted to impress, as well as to instruct—to rouse the sluggish, to convince the hostile, as well as to satisfy the favourable ear.

Elocution, too, as belonging to the rhetorical art, deserves to be cultivated. If considered as the mere embodiment of artificial rules, it is not indeed to be identified with oratory—the oratory of the soul. Augustine, though once himself a teacher of rhetoric, does not so strenuously argue for it, as for what is more essential to the christian advocate—Scripture knowledge and godly sincerity. But all wise men must agree with him in recommending, as he does in his “*Christiana Doctrina*,” due attention to the art of speaking well. Such art is but the application of the principles of nature, reason, and taste, to the enunciation of truth with the best effect, and the removing of all offensive habits of utterance or gesticulation. It is agreeable to philosophy, as is well argued by Dugald Stuart, when treating of the association of ideas, to avoid what may connect our subject or cause, in the hearer's or reader's mind, with what is low and vulgar on the one hand, or too nicely accommodated to the demands of capricious fashion on the other hand. “In the same manner,” he says, “in which an article of dress acquires an appearance of elegance or of vulgarity, from the person by whom it is habitually worn; so a particular mode of pronunciation acquires an air of fashion or of vulgarity, from the person by whom it is habitually employed. The Scotch accent is rarely, in itself, as good as the English, and, with a few exceptions, is as agreeable to the ear; and yet how offensive does it appear, even to us who have been accustomed to hear it from our infancy, when compared with what is used by our southern neighbours. No reason can be given for this, but that the capital of Scotland is now become a provincial town, and London is the seat of our Court.” (Perhaps we might add other reasons, though no doubt degrading on that assigned by the philosopher.) “The distinction which is to be found in the languages of all civilised nations between low and polite modes of expression, arises from similar causes. To this influence of association on language it is necessary for every writer to attend carefully who wishes to express himself with elegance. For the attainment of correctness and purity in the use of words, the rules of grammarians and critics may be a sufficient guide; but it is not in the works of this class of authors that the higher beauties of style are to be studied. As the air and manner of a gentleman can be acquired only by living habitually in the best society, so grace in composition must be attained by a habitual acquaintance with classical writers. D'Alembert tells us that Voltaire had always lying on his table the *Petit Carême* of Massillon, and the tragedies of Racine; the former to fix his taste in prose composition and the latter in poetry.” [Here Dr. Willis named South, Tillotson, Barrow, Walker, and Witherspoon, as sermon-writers useful to be consulted for style; and Addison for classic English generally.] “In avoiding,” continues Stuart, “expressions which are debased by vulgar use, there is a danger of run-

ning into the other extreme in quest of fashionable words and phrases. The works which continue to please from age to age, are written with perfect simplicity, while those which captivate the multitude by a display of metretic ornaments, if, by chance, they should survive the fashions to which they are accommodated, remain only to furnish a subject of ridicule to posterity. The portrait of a beautiful woman, in the fashionable dress of the day, may please at the moment it is painted; nay, may perhaps please more than in any that the fancy of the artist could have suggested, but it is only in the plainest and simplest drapery, that the most perfect form can be transmitted with advantage to future times.”

In the remaining part of his address, Dr Willis took the opportunity of recommending to the younger students, as well as those of the Theology class, the perusal in summer, of the *Latin Collectanea*, recently edited by himself. The reading of these selections from the Fathers, had constituted, he said, an agreeable variety during the present session. Distinguishing between the use and abuse of such writings, he said, I am far from being a worshipper of the Fathers. I would guard you against an undue reverence for antiquity. Bacon said truly, that these modern days are really the days of the Church's or the world's old time, rather than what is called antiquity. The men of long gone ages were children, when we consider the advantages possessed by ours. So it is, if we look to the progressive developments of science, and the large accumulation of historical experience. Still, those men of old had advantages of their own. They lived near to the days of the apostles.—They are witnesses to us of early customs.—Their testimony on facts pertaining to the history of Christianity and its evidence is invaluable. Then, for the sake of defending our holy religion from those pretensions of Popery and Puseyism, which have sought sanction from ancient names, it is well to be able to separate truth from error in the question of authority; and a knowledge of the very errors of the Fathers, enables us to counteract the effects of an excessive deference to their opinion or example.

On the questions of Church government, we ought to be able to expose the partial and hasty deductions, which are sometimes founded on garbled quotations, and the suppression of their qualifying statements. And there are choice pieces of eloquence in the pleadings of the ancient apologists for Christianity, which are worthy the admiration of every scholar. Who would not bear with the hard African Latin of Tertullian, for the sake of coming at last to some such eloquent passages as have been adduced to-day in your recitations? Minucius Felix, again, is worthy to be read to the latest times—for the arguments so forcibly put, and in so *fino* Roman language, in defence of the Christian religion, and in exposure of the absurdities of polytheism.

Cyprian, coming somewhat later, shows that the Church had in his days begun to succumb to the pretensions of hierarchical ambition. But they who quote this Father on the side of dio-

* If you recited anything to Quintilius, he used to say, correct this I beg of you, and this. If you said that you could not do better, having tried two or three times in vain, he would order you to blot all out, and to give your badly polished verses to be remodelled.

† No ardent youth, can reach the goal for which he pants, without much labour, suffering, heat, and cold.