

INTRODUCTION.

ELOCUTION is not yet fully admitted into the number of acknowledged sciences. A few years ago, indeed, there were hardly any to be found who would allow of its utility at all. A great change in this respect has been lately taking place; but even now no small number continue to avow themselves unbelievers in it.—They seem to fancy that good speaking must, like honest Dogberry's reading and writing 'come by nature;' that he who possesses natural facility will of course speak well, while he who has it not is doomed to remain forever a mere bungler.

It is the more difficult to combat this idea, because, like most other errors, it contains a slight admixture of truth. In Elocution, as in every other science, natural talent is no doubt required for the attainment of *extraordinary proficiency*. There are many persons to whom it would be impossible to give any notion of its higher beauties, just as there are many who never can be taught to appreciate fully the sister arts of music, painting, or sculpture. There are even some who cannot be taught at all, just as there are some who cannot be brought to distinguish notes in music, or colors in painting. Almost any one, indeed, may enter on a course of instruction in Elocution with at least as good a prospect of success as he could reasonably entertain in pursuing any other of the fine arts.