

none so obtuse as not to perceive a manifest improvement both in matter and mode of utterance. But many of us were peculiarly ambitious, and so set up standards of excellence in *any* department very high.

The deepest thinkers of the class maintained that the authors previously named were, upon the whole, too explicit in regard to the form of their thoughts, and that the style of which they were masters was at once too superficial and translucent. "If the minds of the vulgar," said they, "are able, without a mighty effort, to grasp the thought intended to be conveyed, there is a lack of appreciation, and hence of permanent advantage. Style is no exception to the rule,—soon acquired and soon despised,—hence let us not make the thoughts that breathe and are mighty, too common by dressing them in the attractive garb of translucent expression. Rather let us invest our ideas with mystery, make them objects of wonder and awe; let us place them even above the utmost verge of comprehension, that admirers may never cease to have a yearning for the unattainable." In the soundness of these views the other members of the class readily acquiesced. They were proud of their class-mates, and marvelled not a little at such ripeness of judgment. All were a unit in thinking there must be a new departure.

It cannot be denied that sundry sermons and lectures delivered in the regions round about had produced lasting impressions upon such of us as had very sensitive and appreciative minds. I am unable to blot from memory the radiant face of my class-fellow as he recited to me one Sunday afternoon, some portions of a sermon he had heard that day. "I tell you," said he "we are too simple in our utterances. There is not enough of the *trēmendorum verborum*. Amplitude, range, compass, circumambieney, multitudinous concatenation, are a few of the elements of success. If you could have seen that audience absolutely spellbound by the thunderous and amazing elocution of a preacher whose talents were certainly not above mediocrity! My abiding conviction is that it is not so much talent and genius as the dexterous wag of the jaw, the ringing of eternal changes upon awful and

grandiloquent words! One of the speaker's sentences was, without controversy, amazing. After divers ramifications and many samples of glowing imagery, inflaming to my young and tender imagination, there was this memorable, magnificent and oracular ending—"All this can be demonstrated on the latitudinal and longitudinal principles of *Endosmos*, and *Exosmos*." Now if I knew that endosmotic and exosmotic process I would give all my acquisitions, would, in fact, pawn all my college discipline, including the great reputation I have won in my Rhetorical studies. There are more things in heaven and earth than were ever dreamed of in our philosophy. We are, I recapitulate, but runts or pigmies in phraseology, while there are giants all around us moulding society with their resounding periods and incomprehensible circumlocution."

With ever-deepening interest I listened to these hurried ejaculations of my dear class-fellow and coeval. Indeed, he spoke as if he had already quaffed one goblet at least of the divine elixir. I watched narrowly the movement of his jaws,—for both seemed to have some play,—I gazed upon his facial angle with intense admiration, I scanned that lip so rounded, plump, and decided at length that he could declaim *ore rotundo*. I freely unbosomed *myself* to him; told him of similar experiences of my own; encouraged him to make progress in the study of the *art of arts*; candidly expressed my conviction that Campbell, Blair, Whately, and all the phalanx of Rhetoricians, neither singly nor combined, could ever reveal to us the true source of eloquence and power with men. From this date our friendship became intensified, seeing we had a common purpose in life—to move the minds and hearts of our fellows by means of misty, mysterious, vibrating periods.

With regard to the one great end to be attained we were in harmony; with respect to the means to be employed we were not. My mate thought we should begin at the alphabet, and so gave a few lessons the precise character of which I do not now clearly remember. Suffice it to say, however, that instead of ears it was necessary to say *auricula*.