THE

# CULTURE OF VOICE AND SPEECH.

AN

## INTRODUCTORY LECTURE ON ELOCUTION,

CONSIDERED IN REFERENCE TO PUBLIC & SOCIAL LIFE.

DELIVERED

IN THE BEGINNING OF THE WINTER SESSION
OF THE EVENING CLASSES

AT

## KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON,

FOR 1873-4.

BY


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# PREFACE.

When I delivered, as usual, my Public Introductory Lecture to the students forming the Class for the Study and Practice of the Art of Public Reading and Speaking, in the Evening Class Department of King's College, London, at the beginning of the present Winter Session, I did not in the least anticipate it would be favoured with the gratifying and flattering notices it received from the *Times*, *Daily News*, *Lancet*, and other leading organs of the Press. To them all I beg to express my most sincere thanks and grateful sense of obligation.

I regret that the incessant work of my vocation has delayed until the present time my being able to comply with the request with which I have been honoured for its publication; but the Lecture, save as regards the citation of authorities, was wholly *extempore*, and it is only now that I have been able to find time to reproduce in writing the thoughts to which I gave expression in my opening address, on the evening of October 7th, together with such additions and authorities as might render it more worthy of being presented to the general public.

*King's College, Christmas*, 1873.

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# THE CULTURE OF VOICE AND SPEECH.

I HAVE invited you here this evening, in pursuance of the course I have adopted ever since I have had the honour of holding my present appointment in this College, to listen to some introductory remarks in reference to the special work entrusted to my charge in this department, and which I have ventured to term "A Lecture on Elocution, considered in reference to Public and Social Life."

The great German philosopher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, who has been so justly termed the father of Comparative Philology, in discussing the subject of language generally, says: "We must exclude from the definition of language everything but actual *speaking*. . . . The essence of language lies in the *living utterance*—in that which does not suffer itself to be apprehended in the sundered elements of *written words*. . . . It is only by the *spoken* word that the speaker breathes, as it were, his own life into the souls of his hearers. . . . *Written* language is only an imperfect and mummy-like embalming, of which the highest use is that it may serve as a means of re-producing the living utterance." And more recently the Rev. Canon Kingsley, in one of his delightful essays, begins it with the remark that: "To the minute philosopher few things seem more miraculous than human speech."

Let the assertions, then, of the philosopher and the divine, serve as the text for the discourse which I propose offering you this evening, on the importance of cultivating, to the

utmost of our ability, those faculties of the mind and those organs of the body, which, in their just combination of action, and in their highest order of development, constitute the accomplished speaker or reader, or in other words the science and art of elocution. Let me endeavour to show you why elocution should form a part of our education—not only as regards the effects to be produced on others, when we read or speak, but as regards its reflex advantages on ourselves, not merely mentally, but physically. Let me support my various assertions, and the propositions I hope to establish to your satisfaction, by the testimony of authorities of the highest order, and against whom no possible suspicion can exist of having any personal interest to serve. Let me try, at least, fairly to examine and answer some of the principal objections which have, from time to time, been brought against the study of elocution by persons who, I think, have not maturely considered what true elocution really is, and have confounded two things we are but too apt to confuse in our progress through life—viz., abuse with use.

This, then, is the outline of the course I propose taking this evening ; and to which, without further preface, I now solicit your kind attention.

It is well, in all discussions, that we should start, if possible, with clear definitions of our subjects, and that our terms should be accurately defined. My subject then, to-night, is elocution, and the two aspects under which I propose to regard it, are (1) In reference to Public, and (2) In regard to Social Life.

Let me take these, then, in their due order. What do I mean by elocution? Suppose I answer this question first of all in a somewhat *negative* fashion, and tell you what I do *not* mean whenever I have occasion to make use of this much abused word—elocution. I do not mean, then, anything pompous, stilted, bombastic, or "*stagey*." I do

not mean anything pédantic, stiff, formal, or unnatural. If elocution either meant, or, properly understood and rightly taught, tended to anything of the kind, I should be the very last to say one word on its behalf, either here or elsewhere.

So much, then, for the negative portion of my answer; and now let me try to give you the affirmative. If you ask me to define what it is I *do* mean by elocution, I think I should reply somewhat in the following manner: I should say, first of all, it is the perfectly audible, distinct, pure, and effective pronunciation which is given to words when they are arranged into sentences, and form written or extemporaneous composition, either in the shape of prose or poetry. Besides this purity of intonation and clearness of articulation, I include under the term all those appropriate inflections and modulations of the speaking voice: the due observance of the great physiological law of *poise;* the notation of another element, scarcely less important, that of Quantity; proper pauses, and right discrimination in degrees of emphasis, all of which are requisite in order to render delivery most effective in its results, not only as regards the judgment and intellect, but the feelings and emotions of those whom we address. Nor does my definition stop here; for I include, moreover, when suitable to the occasion, all the ever varying accompaniments of the human countenance and figure—the manifold play of feature, attitude, and gesture. And I do so because nature has a language unspoken as well as spoken, and the flash of indignation from the eye, the frown of anger on the brow, the lip smiling with pleasure, or curled in scorn and contempt—nay, the simple raising of a hand in appeal or in deprecation will often convey the particular passion or emotion of the moment as eloquently as any words can do, however aptly chosen. Thus, then, you will see that under

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my definition of elocution, I mean a delivery which not only expresses fully the grammatical or logical sense of all the words employed, so as to be thoroughly heard, understood, and felt by the hearer, but, at the same time, gives the whole sentence which such words compose all the power, beauty, grace, and melody of which its form of construction is capable. And last, though not least, in the elements of my definition is the knowledge of the means by which all this may be done with *personal ease, freedom, and self-possession* on the part of the speaker or reader, when he is made acquainted with the physiology and proper use of the respiratory, vocal, and speech organs in their due co-ordination of action.

This, then, is my ideal of elocution; a high one, I confess! But it is well, in all that is deserving of study, whether in the world of art, science, or ethics, to keep a high ideal before us; to which let us strive our utmost to approximate, even though that ideal we may never hope actually to attain. That elocution, then, is an art which requires much study to develope it in all its full power and beauty, even when nature has been liberal in bestowing a fine and flexible voice and quickness of appreciation in matters of taste and sympathy of feeling, will, I think, be conceded without much hesitation. This, being conceded, we come now to the all-important question—are we sufficiently rewarded for all the time, thought, and study, we may give to the acquisition of this art? Are we sufficiently requited for all the pains we may bestow in becoming thoroughly acquainted with its theory, and then carrying out and developing that theory in practice? I think we are, both in regard to public and social life. Let me glance, first, at those spheres of life, which we may term public, and under which head I would take, as illustrations, the minister of religion generally, without reference to any particular church or creed; the advocate

in our courts of law, and the speakers in our houses of parliament and at public meetings. All these so far resemble each other in their vocation that their aim is, when engaged in their professional or public duties, to convince the judgment of their hearers of the truth or soundness of the views which the speaker is enforcing, or else to persuade them to a certain course of conduct or action. The minister of religion, moreover, has, by the mode in which his more specially sacred functions are performed, to endeavour to excite, to the fullest degree, the devotional feelings of his congregation. And through what channel are all these desired ends and aims to be attained? Through *words spoken by the living human voice*, with all its marvellous sympathetic powers of intonation, inflection, and modulation, enforced as far as possible by the expression of the countenance and gesture.

Let me venture to quote a few passages—not from any professional writer on, or teacher of, elocution (for that, as I said at first, I shall avoid doing as much as possible), but from an article lately published by an eminent American divine (the Rev. E. Kirk, of Boston), "on the preparation required for the public duties of the ministry," which is not less applicable to the subject, I think, in England than in America:—

"It is easy to recognize the difference between a speaker who is agreeable and one who is disagreeable; between one who is powerful and another who is feeble. Nor can any one entertain a doubt whether the difference is not just as obvious in the pulpit as in the senate, forum, or on the public platform. Every preacher, I should think, would desire so to deliver his sermon as that his meaning should be clearly perceived, and his sentiments deeply felt, rather than to utter it in a manner unintelligible and unimpressive. Every congregation of worshippers would prefer in their pastor a good

delivery to an awkward and disagreeable style of speaking. Let two men of equal piety and scholarship be presented to any of our religious societies, the one a man of easy, becoming carriage in the pulpit, of apparently simple, natural, and powerful utterance; the other uncouth in attitude and movement, indistinct and stammering in his enunciation, and wearisome in his drawling tones. Can any man in his senses doubt which of the two would be chosen? No! Thus far the case is plain. But if we go back from this, and observe this finished speaker practising in the detail of his studies and vocal exercises, there we shall find some demurring. Many who admire the orator are averse to the process of discipline which gave him the better style. There is, in other words, a prejudice in the community, and among many excellent candidates for the ministry, in regard to elocution as an art to be obtained by study and practice. This prejudice is worthy of a candid examination and an earnest effort to remove it. In the minds of some, the study and practice of elocution is connected, if not identified, with the idea of substituting sound and emotion for sense and truth. To such persons it may be suggested that there is no necessity for this substitution. The importance of elocution pre-supposes the importance of other things; and for men who are morally and intellectually qualified to act as preachers, the importance of effective delivery and manner can scarcely be overrated. To overlook it is a proof neither of piety, dignity, nor wisdom. If there were some ethereal way of communicating with the mind, if the process of preaching were designed to be mesmeric, and people were to be put to sleep, instead of being aroused, in order to instruct and impress them, we might dispense with elocution and the culture it requires. But so long as men are in the body, it will be found requisite for the most effective exercise of the ministry that a part of clerical education consists in the study and

practice of elocution. That necessity is founded on these two facts—that the communication of thought and feeling depends upon the right exercise of our bodily organs; and that those organs are within the domain of that great law which requires the cultivation of the faculties. It is not sufficient for the purposes of electrical power that the battery be fully charged: a good conductor must be added. Alas! how much of the preaching to which we have to listen is of the class of *non-conductors!* In the minds of others, again, elocution is identified with an ostentatious exhibition of the graces and the accomplishments of the speaker. But this is confounding the *use* with the *abuse* of a good thing. Since it is a man who is to be heard and seen, and since there is but *one right* way of speaking or reading aloud, while there are a *thousand wrong* ways, the man will do well to learn the right way. And if the agreeable impression produced by an agreeable voice, manner, and person can conduce to the right impression of truth, the very purity of his desire to do good should induce him to cultivate voice, manner, and person. There is nothing in the study of elocution, rightly understood and practised, that need awaken personal vanity. Nor is there any more inducement for an eloquent man to display all the means by which he acquired the power of commanding the sympathies and interest of his audience than there is for a learned man to parade all his learning, or to become a mere pedant. Others fear that they shall be tempted to turn their chief attention in the pulpit to tones and gestures, and thus degrade their high vocation. This, again, is no necessary consequence, and would be simply a perversion of the art. The greatest orator, in an extemporaneous address, pays strict attention to the minutest rules of grammar, but there is no interruption in all this to the concentrated action of his understanding; no extinction to the fiery current of his feeling. The rules of elocution are

designed to form the man, to correct the bad habits of attitude, speech, and gesture, and to make the voice, countenance, and body in every way fit instruments for a mind full of noble thoughts and powerful emotions."

There is one objection more to which I turn, and which I hope to answer, and then I proceed to a different part of my subject. You may have heard well meaning persons, but who cannot, I think, have maturely considered the matter, object to the resources of the art of elocution (which, after all, means only the aggregate of all that constitutes a good delivery), being introduced into the reading-desk and pulpit, and say that it savours of irreverence to privately rehearse, over and over again, public prayers addressed to the Deity, or to read the lessons from the Bible, with all the rules of elocution so fully carried out, that the standard which has been set up for the right performance of their various ministerial functions shall be satisfied; and that to study the most effective manner in which a sermon can be delivered, as a great tragedian would study the part he has to perform, is to reduce the high calling of the preacher to an unworthy level. Now, in answer to this, let me, in the first place, ask—how is the singing of hymns and anthems managed in our cathedrals, churches, and chapels? Is their conducting left to persons wholly unskilled in the art of vocal music? Do not organists and choristers meet and practise, and rehearse, over and over again, the anthems, psalms, and hymns they have to sing, until all is thought of sufficient excellence to be played and sung in public worship? Why? I presume for one reason, to warm and excite, as much as possible, the devotional feelings of the congregation. Now, then, I ask, are psalms, hymns, and anthems, less direct appeals to God, than the prayers in our Liturgy; and do not all claim to be parts of divine service? I answer, what is not thought to be waste of time

nor irreverence in the one case is equally neither waste of time nor irreverence in the other.

In the Contemporary Review, for the month of October, 1872, in a very scholarly article, entitled "The Ethics of Ritual," by the Rev. J. B. Mayor, you will find this passage, which I think very applicable to my subject:—

"The readings from the Bible, when we pass beyond those narrative passages, which can never be wholly without interest, even for the least awakened mind, call for much thought and much knowledge to understand their general drift. . . . If we have fallen into the habit (so much fostered by our sermons) of looking upon each text, merely as a peg on which to hang a meditation, without reference to the context, or the readers to whom it was primarily addressed, 'the Word' will be no light to our eyes, or guide to our feet; we shall simply see our own fancies reflected everywhere. There is no learning—no advance. Much may be done by an intelligent reader to enforce the meaning of what he reads by variation of tone, and pause, and emphasis. Such semi-dramatic reading seems to us to be almost essential, if the minds of the uneducated are to be reached; and for their sakes, at any rate, we much regret the prevalent use of the monotone in reading the lessons in ritualistic churches."

To read the Liturgy and to preach a sermon *well* is an art that requires just as much to be studied and practised as the singing of hymns and anthems is an art that requires proper training and cultivation. If we are to have public worship at all, I say every part of it should be made as excellent as possible, and no part of it be in any way neglected.

And now I glance very briefly—for my time is limited, and I have other topics on which I desire to touch before I finish my remarks—at the professions of the advocate, the lecturer, and public speakers generally. I am perfectly

well aware that anything like grandiloquence, declamation, poetical flights, and rhetorical appeals are quite alien to our present national character. Modern taste and general tone of thought and feeling in our English courts of justice are utterly opposed to all useless declamatory froth and mere rhetorical display. And certainly it is only comparatively but rarely that the circumstances of a case afford any just ground for what would be termed the higher flights of eloquence; and in the present day perspicuity of language and earnestness of manner are, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the chief requisites of an advocate, as well as of public speakers generally. Still the barrister is not always arguing dry, abstruse, and intricate points of law before Courts of Equity, or Judges sitting *in Banco;* and in one branch of it, at least, he will have to address juries drawn from many grades of society in the metropolis, as well as at assizes and sessions, with whom, I am disposed to think, a *powerful delivery* and *earnest manner* have, to say the least, a very strong influence.

Well, what advantages will the advocate, lecturer, or public speaker derive from a knowledge of elocution? I can answer these, at any rate. He will learn the mode in which the speaking voice is formed, so as to fill easily the whole area of the court or hall in which his duties have to be performed; and he will learn the secret of combining distinctness with audibility, so that nothing shall be lost of what he has to say to his hearers; and he will acquire the means of delivering the most important words and passages in the most effective manner. He will obtain, too, such a mastery and power of discipline over his voice as to be able to control it, from the loudest tone down to little more than a mere whisper, and be able to properly inflect and modulate it, according to the results he wishes to produce upon his hearers. There are, I think, no small advantages as regards others; but are

there any more selfish benefits which a knowledge of elocution will confer upon the public speaker or reader himself? There are, most undoubtedly. It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that there is a *wrong*, as well as a *right*, way of using the vocal and speech organs in all public speaking and reading. If there is a way of diminishing the exhaustion and lessening the sense of fatigue after speaking or reading in public; if there is a way of preventing altogether some of the much complained of disastrous physical effects of public speaking and reading, surely a wise and prudent man will not think the matter beneath his notice. By the disastrous effects, I mean the malady commonly known as "clerical sore-throat," and kindred diseases, which result from a disarrangement of the functions of the throat and chest. It cannot be too strongly urged that there is a mode of employing the vocal organs in the larynx which most needlessly and seriously inflames the membrane that lines the throat, and the delicate structure of the bronchial tubes; and uselessly wastes the general nervous energy of the system. All this could be entirely avoided by learning to use the various organs of voice and speech in their right sequence of action, so that proper respiration, vocal utterance, and the law of *poise* be all duly and harmoniously carried on. Then an hour's speaking or reading aloud will be, not a fatigue for the body, but merely a healthful and beneficial exercise. Is this any exaggeration? I have the testimony afforded by the experience of many public speakers and preachers, who, by proper exercises, have entirely recovered the use of the vocal powers they had lost, and have acquired the power of speaking or preaching with an ease to which they were previously entire strangers. Let me content myself with only one, a clergyman (the Rev. Ch. Butcher),

who kindly permits me to quote his words, and who says: "I assure you, I formerly felt more fatigued after reading the Litany in a small country church than I do now after taking three full services in the large church of St. Clement Danes, Strand, in every part of which I am told that I am distinctly heard."* There can be no doubt (to use the words of Professor McIlvaine of New York) that those wasting throat diseases, with which clergymen are afflicted more than any other class of public speakers, are traceable physiologically to bad management of the voice, to the violation of those laws which nature has prescribed; laws which, like all others established by the God of nature, can never be violated with impunity. This view is confirmed by the fact, to which many can bear witness, that no more effectual remedy for those diseases has been discovered than a course of sound elocutionary training.

Now, then, I come to another division of my subject. I have to regard elocution as I have defined it, in its relationship to social life. I contend that, when properly understood and practised, it is worthy of taking rank as one of the fine arts.—Rather a bold proposition, it may be said. Well, let me ask, what are the fine arts? You will answer, doubtless, music, vocal and instrumental, the dramatic art, painting, drawing, sculpture, architecture in its highest forms, etc. Yes, but why do you call these arts *fine* arts? I suppose you will answer somewhat after this manner—"We call them *fine* arts, because they are all of them arts that give beauty and grace to civilized life; or they are arts which combine, in a high degree, the gratification of pure and

* The same clergyman, now the Consular Chaplain at Shanghai, China, in a letter I have received from him since the delivery of this lecture, dated from the Chaplaincy, Shanghai, August 18th, 1873, says:—"I am sure elocution is the healthiest thing in the world. I have an immense church, and three services a day—and this with the thermometer at 90° for three months of the year—and yet I am never ill, or sensible of fatigue."

refined taste, with the exercise of an enlightened intellect and an exalted imagination. If this is a true definition of the fine arts (and none I fancy will question it), then I think that elocution as shown, not in the elaborate and impassioned speech of the great statesman, advocate, or divine, but in a much humbler and more ordinary form, may be ranked in the same category. Let me take the instance of some simple, though beautiful poem, read aloud in the family or social circle; and then, if it has been rendered with purity of intonation, and all those proper inflections and modulations of the voice, together with due discrimination in emphasis, and all the other elements requisite to convey the true meaning and expression, let me ask whether it is not one of those arts which impart a charm to social intercourse, and lend a grace to ordinary life—in a word, whether it is not one of the fine arts?

When all the requisites that form a really good reader are taken into consideration, I think we may well wonder, not so much that the accomplishment is far too generally neglected, but that it does not form, with all who look upon education in its true light and meaning, the *drawing out* of all our best faculties, an important means in early—nay, in all stages of life, as well as in all classes of society, for refining and elevating the mind, for cultivating the sympathies, and for quickening and developing those habits of perception and appreciation of the beautiful in *all* arts, which, when once acquired, generally endure throughout life, and are so precious in themselves, and so valuable to us and our fellow-creatures.

One of the greatest thinkers of our age whose loss is felt to be more than a national calamity—for it is a loss, indeed, to the philosophy of the civilized world, I mean John Stuart Mill—thus, in his autobiography, just published, speaks of elocution :—

"In going through Plato and Demosthenes, since I could now read these authors, as far as the language was concerned, with perfect ease, I was not required to construe them sentence by sentence, but to read them aloud to my father, answering questions when asked; but the particular attention which he paid to *elocution* (in which his own excellence was remarkable) made this reading aloud to him a most painful task. Of all things which he required me to do, there was none which I did so constantly ill, or in which he so perpetually lost his temper with me. He had thought much on the principles of the art of reading, especially the most neglected parts of it, the inflections and modulations of the voice, as writers on elocution call them (in contrast with *articulation* on the one side, and *expression* on the other), and had reduced it to rules, grounded on the logical analysis of a sentence. These rules he strongly impressed upon me, and took me severely to task for every violation of them; but I even then remarked (though I did not venture to make the remark to him) that, though he reproached me when I read a sentence ill, he never, by reading it himself, *showed* me how it ought to be read. A defect running through his otherwise admirable modes of instruction, as it did through all his modes of thought, was that of trusting too much to the intelligibleness of the abstract, when not embodied in the concrete. It was at a much later period of my youth, when practising elocution by myself, or with companions of my own age, that I, for the first time, understood the object of his rules, and saw the psychological ground of them. At that time, I and others followed out the subject into its ramifications, and could have composed a very useful treatise, grounded on my father's principles. He, himself, left those principles and rules unwritten. I regret that when my mind was full of the subject, from systematic practice, I did not

put them, and our improvements of them, into a formal shape." *

So also the excellent and eloquent Scotch divine, who has so lately passed away from us, Dr. Guthrie, in his autobiography just published, thus expresses his opinion of the importance of the arts of elocution, and the importance he attached to its acquisition :—

"I had, when a student in divinity, paid more than ordinary attention to the art of elocution, knowing how much of the effect produced on the audience depended on the *manner* as well as the *matter ;* that, in point of fact, the manner is to the matter as the powder is to the ball. I had attended elocution classes winter after winter, walking across half the city and more, after eight o'clock at night, fair night and foul, and not getting back to my lodgings till about half-past ten. There I learned to find out and correct many acquired and more or less awkward defects in gesture—to be, in fact, natural ; to acquire a command over my voice so as to suit its force and emphasis to the sense, and to modulate it so as to express the feelings, whether of surprise or grief, indignation, or pity. I had heard very indifferent discourses made forcible by a vigorous, and able ones ones reduced to feebleness by a poor, pithless delivery. I had read of the extraordinary pains Demosthenes and Cicero took to cultivate their manner and become masters of the arts of elocution ; and I knew how, by a masterly and natural use of these, Whitfield could sway the crowds that gathered to hear him at early morn on the commons of London, as a breeze does the standing corn, making men at his pleasure weep or laugh by the way he pronounced 'Mesopotamia.' Many have supposed that I owe any power I have of modulating my voice, and giving effect thereby to what I am delivering, to a musical ear. On the contrary, I am, as they say in Scotland, 'timmer

* "Autobiography of John Stuart Mill," pp. 23, 24.

tuned'—have not the vestige even of the musical faculty, never knowing when people go off the tune but when they stick!"

You will grant, I imagine, that the dramatic art, in its highest forms and embodiments, is one of the fine arts. If it is so, let me strengthen my position by the support given to my argument by that well-known American divine, Dr. Channing. In discussing the drama and dramatic amusements generally, he asks, "whether there is not a source of the highest intellectual pleasure, having the closest possible approximation to the drama, viz., recitation or reading aloud? To hear a work of genius (he says) recited or read by a man of fine taste, enthusiasm, and powers of elocution, is a very high and pure gratification. Were this art only more cultivated and encouraged amongst us, great numbers of persons, now insensible to the most beautiful compositions, might be awakened to their full excellence and power. It is not easy to conceive a more effectual way of spreading a refined taste through a community. Should this only be established among us successfully, the result would be that the power of recitation would be more extensively called forth, and this would be a most valuable addition to our social and domestic pleasures."

I might quote many other authorities, English as well as American, but on this point I will content myself with but one more, a name of high and well deserved reputation, Professor John Hullah, of this college. Mr. Hullah has recently published a most able little work "*On the Cultivation of the Speaking Voice*," which I would strongly recommend to any one who wishes to see how closely allied to the music of speech is the the music of song. Indeed, it would be difficult to draw the exact line of demarcation—if indeed there is one at all—between the music of elocution, as shown in the pure vocal tone, the widely ranging and proper

inflections and modulations of the voice in the recitation of some grand or beautiful poem, and the music of song, as shown in the powerful and expressive recitative of a Santley or Sims Reeves in an oratorio by Handel or Haydn. It would be almost impossible, I think, to say where the music of the one art ends and that of the other begins. All the terms that are used in music are in general applicable to elocution. *Piano* and *forte*, with their various degrees; *crescendo*, and *diminuendo*, *legato*, *sostenuto*, *and staccato;* Time, *andante*, and *allegro*, and their modifications, the marks of emphasis, expression; and *à piacere* or *ad libitum*—all these are terms of art which may be applied as fitly to elocution as to song. But can we go beyond this? Can the music of speech be noted, its inflections in the range which the voice takes rising or falling in the musical scale be duly marked, the duration of the vowel in the syllables of words or in monosyllabic words rightly indicated; can all this be done by external signs or technical marks of indication? It can. But to go further than this, can the music of speech, as shown in elocution, be divided into bars—regular and systematic bars—upon fixed and definite principles, as in the music of song? It can, and here is the proof. There lies before me on this table a book more than a century old, of which I apprehend the majority in this room have never seen the name or heard of the author. It is entitled "*Prosodia Rationalis*," and the author is Joshua Steele. It is an old book, a rare book, and a very learned book. As I open it and shew these pages to you, I imagine that any one on bestowing a mere cursory glance at them would think I was showing him the score of some song composed a hundred years ago. It is, indeed, a grand and solemn theme to which these notes are set; and how I wish I could but hear them once more rendered by the great artist, whose recital of them thrilled all hearts at our great National Theatre in

1772; for this is Hamlet's famous soliloquy on death and immortality as rendered (with some slight variations suggested by the author of the work) by that greatest of actors of the last century, David Garrick. Here you have all the technical signs which indicate quantity, inflections, and modulation; the poise which marks the bars, &c.; the very interpretation of the great tragedian, noted from actual observation by Mr. Steele, handed down to us, and rendered capable of being perpetuated for the instruction of future generations. Time warns me that I must not dwell further on this portion of my argument. To those who wish to make fuller investigation into the subject I would name particularly, in addition to the authors to whom I have already referred, the great American work written "*On the Voice*" by the celebrated physician, Dr. Rush; the Abbé Thibont's work, entitled "*Action Oratoire*;" and the treatise by the late John Thelwall "*On English Rhythmus*," based avowedly on Joshua Steele's system, as developed in his "*Prosodia Rationalis*."

But now in this place arises the question—is there need for any such instruction in elocution? Do we really want it at the present time? Let me, as an answer, give you a passage which you will find in a charming volume of short essays published during the last year by that original thinker and accomplished writer, Sir Arthur Helps, under the title of "Brevia":—

"How few men can talk distinctly and clearly! With how many persons, especially the young of *this* generation, is their talk a something which combines a lisp, a mutter, a mumble, and a moan! How many times in the course of a conversation amongst English people do you not hear the question—'What did you say?' Then as to the reading—I put it to this intelligent company. Do you know amongst your numerous friends and acquaintances ten persons who

can read aloud *really well?* You are silent. Then, as to public speaking—how few have attained to any proficiency in this art, which, however, is not a very difficult art. It is a thousand pities there are not more proficients in this art; for if there were it would not have so exorbitant a value put upon it, and men who are proficient in it would not occupy so great a position in the State as they do now. The man who can *do* a thing well is, unfortunately, often now the last man who can *speak* about it in public well, or even talk about it well."—*Brevia, p.* 145.

Sir Arthur Helps laments in these strong terms the prevalence of inaudible, indistinct, and expressionless reading and speaking. But can we wonder at it when, as a part of our regular education, it is so wholly neglected. I am aware that during the last ten years the elocution of the English language has been much more made a subject of study and practice at private schools of repute, for both sexes, than was formerly the case. But still, at the present moment, there is no regular professorship founded or endowed for giving instruction in the art at either of our great universities; and (as far as I can speak from my own experience) the only public educational institutions, where lectures or courses of instruction have been given in the art of reading and speaking our native tongue properly and effectively, are this College, University College, Wellington College, the City of London College, the Royal Naval School, the Polytechnic, the Birkbeck, and the Quebec Institutions. As far as I know, there is nothing of the kind at the present moment at Eton, at Harrow, at Rugby, at Winchester, at Westminster, St. Paul's, the Charterhouse, or Christ's Hospital. If I am wrong in this statement most gladly shall I receive the information that I am mistaken. Now, then, what are the results of this neglect? I put the question, but, as before, I would prefer that the answer should be given by another rather than

myself. Let it come then from the Rev. Francis Trench, who, in a lecture delivered by him in London some time ago on "Good and Bad Reading in Church, School, and Home," says:—

"I must confess I can recall nothing worse than *ordinary school* reading and recitation (mark, I say *ordinary*, because I am well aware that there are some exceptions), whether in the institutions for the rich or for the poor in our land. Many amongst us can remember very well the method in which we ourselves said our scholastic lessons in our former days. Whether any improvement in this method has of late taken place, I am unable to say. I trust that it may be so; but at the public school where I myself was, and one, too, not inferior in repute to any in the land—I mean Harrow—the utmost attainable speed in recitation was allowed, a false key and monotonous delivery of the worst kind was never corrected or rebuked, no attempt whatever was made to render or to keep the utterance in harmony with the sense; and bad habits of delivery were formed and allowed, in a manner almost too strange for belief, and on which I can only now look back with exceeding surprise. Nor do I conceive that the system was in the least better at other schools. I cannot let them escape. For should the Etonian, the Winchester, Rugby, or Westminster man, or the representative of any other public school, ask me what grounds I have for such a statement, my answer to the challenge would be, that at college I had full means and opportunity to judge from the reading of the students there. They were gathered from all schools of distinction; and to any one hearing them it was evident enough that the general delivery at other schools was by no means superior to that which was allowed, and which prevailed at my own. A system this not only most objectionable, and most injurious at the time even to a just impression of the sense of the passage read,

but also so lasting in its evil consequences, that many never are emancipated or escape from them. I say this advisedly; and even those who do escape often only escape after many years, and with no little difficulty. Hence, I believe, originates much of the bad reading which we hear in public worship. Hence, I believe, originates that monotonous cadence and drawl, which is so adverse to the due expression by the reader, and to the due comprehension by the hearer, of any passage read. The ear may be lulled, but the mind is not reached; at least, if reached, it is reached in spite of the reader's bad tone and enunciation. And here I quote the words of one who felt this evil very deeply, and laboured very constantly for its removal, or, at least, its mitigation—the Rev. C. Simeon. 'How often,' said he, 'are the prayers of the Church spoiled, and good sermons rendered uninteresting, by bad delivery on the part of ministers.' "

Mr. Trench then proceeds to show in detail how the same lamentable neglect of the art of reading aloud prevails equally in private schools, from the highest to the lowest class, and calls attention to the fact, that even at the time when he was speaking, so glaring was the evil in our national schools, that a circular letter had been sent from Her Majesty's Board of the Privy Council to the various inspectors of schools, stating that "complaints have been made to their lordships concerning the very small degree of attention which *reading* (as part of *elocution*) receives in elementary schools, and making it imperative to include an exercise on the art of reading in the oral part of the next Christmas examination at the training-schools.

Even now, as we have seen, there is no complaint more general than the rarity of good readers, even in those professions and in those ranks of society where better things might have been expected. About twelve years ago, in consequence of a notification on the part of

the late Bishop of Rochester, that a certificate of competence as a reader would be required in the case of candidates for ordination in his lordship's diocese, a general awakening to the importance of the subject seemed to take place among clergy and laity, and for several weeks one could hardly take up a newspaper, from *The Times* to the humblest provincial journal, without seeing leading articles and letters on "Clerical Elocution."

But no adequate practical result of any substantial and permanent nature followed from all these discussions. It was an illustration of the old proverb, "Great cry, but little wool." Complaints teemed on all sides, but there was little done to remedy the complaint. Several of the bishops have, I know, from that time advised young curates and candidates for orders to take a regular course of instruction in the art of public reading, from those whom they thought were competent, from natural qualifications, education, position and experience, to teach that art. But beyond this nothing has been done, and the evil is nearly, if not quite, as prominent and widely spread as ever.

What a very able writer says, under the signature of "Rhetor," in a letter to the editor of *The English Churchman*, dated October 3, 1861, may be reproduced now with as much truth as then. The laity (he says towards the close of his letter) complain, and most justly, of the bad reading inflicted on them Sunday after Sunday. But how can it be otherwise while the present system lasts? Candidates for the ministry have no proper instruction, either in the *public schools* or *universities*. They enter on their professional duties with provincialisms and *cockneyisms* uncorrected, and read positively worse than many of their congregation. The varieties of professional incapacity are endless; the *mutterer*, who swallows all his final syllables; the *drawler*, who wearies with his tediousness; the *gabbler*, who rushes

through the service at express speed; the *preacher*, who mistakes prayers for sermons; the *spouter*, who mouths the prayers with the most painful affectation. All these evils are the necessary consequences of the inadequate estimate of the end in view, and the means to be employed for its attainment.

On the occasion of the distribution of Prizes to the Students of the Evening Classes Department, a few years ago, the present Archbishop of York, who occupied the chair as President of the meeting, adverted at considerable length to the Class for instruction in Public Reading and Speaking, of which I have the honour to be the Lecturer. His Grace said, "that in his opinion there was no subject of more general importance than this. It was scarcely possible to attend any Church or public assembly of any kind without meeting with instances of defective articulation, inaudibility, indistinctness of utterance, or other faults in delivery. In place of clear, fluent enunciation, true expression and feeling, we too often meet with instances in which the reading and speaking are characterised by the absence of almost every requisite that should mark a good delivery. He himself had not seldom heard readers and speakers in which all the five vowels were so untruly sounded, that it was really difficult to say which vowel was the one intended to be uttered. There were also often strong provincialisms and other faults in the intonation and pronunciation, which, with care and attention, might often be speedily removed under the instruction of an able and judicious teacher, but which, while they existed, were most unpleasing to persons of refined ear and cultivated taste. These various faults in delivery which he had enumerated too often marred the effect of our Church services, the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and the delivery of Sermons. He, therefore, saw, with great gratification, that in this department of King's

College there were lectures and instruction given in the art of Public Reading, and attended by so large a class, and that prizes also were awarded for excellence in elocution."

With regard to public speaking, which he saw was in the syllabus coupled with instruction in public reading, his Grace said, "that if, as he understood, was meant by this, the actual practice in the art of discussion, of clothing thoughts in clear and fluent language addressed to others, and so acquiring ease and expression in delivery, as well as confidence and self-possession, it was deserving of every encouragement, and met with his warmest approval; for few things were more painful to witness than the nervousness, hesitation, and embarrassment of an untrained speaker, who often had excellent matter for a speech, but knew not how to deliver it, from want of training and practice. In this country, and in this age, almost every great religious, political, and social movement was effected by the agency of public speaking, and the advantages of being well versed in this art, as well as in that of public reading, were becoming every day more apparent."

I cannot do better here than quote a very striking and appropriate passage from Professor Seeley's essay on "English in Schools," very recently published. He says:—

"The students being assumed able to read, the first thing is to teach them to read *well*. By reading well, I do not mean merely *correctly*, but *distinctly* and *expressively*. I mean, in short, that they should be taught *elocution*. To this I attach the greatest importance. It is more than a hundred years since Bishop Berkeley propounded the question, whether half the learning and talent of England were not wholly lost because elocution was not taught in schools and colleges. The same question might be repeated now; so slow are we English people in taking a hint. But it is not

for its practical use only that I wish to see elocution introduced into education; not so much to prevent English people from swallowing their words, as they do now, to the astonishment and dismay of foreigners who are trying to learn our language; nor yet that those whose profession or business in after life demands public speaking, or reading, may be taught to speak and read with effect. It is mainly because I think that by this means, more than any other, may be evoked in the minds of the young a taste for poetry and eloquence. This taste is really very universal: generally, where it appears wanting, it is only dormant; and it is dormant because no means have ever been taken to cultivate the *sense of rhythm*, and to make the *delightfulness* of speech understood."—*Lectures and Essays by J. R. Seeley, M. A., Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, pp.* 231-2.

Now let me consider another question. Have we in our modern composite English language an instrument fitted for, and worthy of, the application of all the elements of artistic and refined elocution? Is it that harsh, rugged, and unmusical tongue which some persons assert it to be? I utterly deny that the modern English of good composition is a harsh and rugged language when properly read or spoken, unless words of harsh and rugged sound be introduced purposely on the principle of concord between *sound* and *sense*—a principle that is to be found more or less apparent and developed in all languages with which I have any sort of acquaintance. Why has the reproach of being "harsh and rugged" so often been cast upon our language by foreigners, as well as Englishmen, and a contrast, disadvantageous to us, been drawn between our tongue and that of Italy or Spain, for example? I think I can give a sufficient reason as an answer. The elements of all tone, inflection, and modulation in human speech are obviously

and necessarily the vowels. Let any of us hear the average educated Italian or Spaniard read or speak his own tongue and we are struck at once with the beauty of the *sound* of the language. Again I ask why? Probably the answer will be "because Italian and Spanish abound in so many fine, rich, open vowels," and, so far as it goes, the reason given in such answer is true enough; but it is not the whole reason. Observe a little more closely and you will find, as a rule, generally that the Italian or the Spaniard forms the vowels purely and sonorously, dwells upon them properly, so that he has ample *material* for due inflection and modulation, and thus his own pronunciation contributes largely to the musical quality, richness, and beauty of the sound of the language of which he is so justly proud. Now, then, in contrast to this, note the ordinary delivery of the average Englishman, who has had no acquaintance with the elements of elocution, or with reading aloud, or public speaking, considered as an art, and I think you will find as a rule that the lungs are but seldom inflated sufficiently, or the *glottis* opened enough for the pure sound of the different vowels, that they are but seldom duly dwelt upon and properly inflected and modulated, and very little use is made of the many and complicated functions of the *larynx;* neither do the articulating organs, such as the tongue, lips, &c., perform their part in pronunciation with sufficient energy and precision of action. Hence that loose, muffled, and indistinct delivery, which the *Saturday Review,* not so very long ago, in a most excellent and amusing essay "On Voices," characterised as "fluffy," and asserted that this "fluffiness" of style was the special characteristic of the average Englishman's speech. Hence that unmusical and expressionless "gabble," which so often pains and wearies our ears in the reading desk, pulpit, and public meeting, and which has brought down upon our glorious English tongue—that

tongue which the great German philoligist, Jacob Grimm, asserts to possess "a veritable power of expression and comprehension unsurpassed by any language on earth, whether ancient or modern"—the reproach of being "harsh and rugged." No! I say again, most emphatically, the reproach is not deserved. Our English language has not merely a sufficiency of consonants to give it nerve, energy, and power, but quite a sufficient recurrence of vowels, *if justice is only done to them*, to give it full beauty and melody of sound in pronunciation. I give this challenge—Let anyone hear a fine passage from Shakespeare, Milton, or Tennyson, for instance, read by an accomplished and refined reader, well endowed with good natural gifts, and capable, by study and practice in the art of elocution, of conveying all that the poet would desire to the senses and feelings of his audience, and then say, if he honestly can, that our English language is wanting either in grandeur or beauty of sound.

So far, then, I have been considering this subject in the light of a high and pure pleasure, which should be cultivated by us for the sake of the gratification which it yields to others, and as a great addition to our social enjoyments. But I cannot conclude without adverting to it under a more selfish aspect. It seems to me one of the beneficent laws of the Creator that all good is, in the language of our great dramatist, "twice blest, blessing him that gives and him that takes." So, too, as regards the art for which I appear as advocate to-night. The vocal and speech organs cannot be properly developed by a course of true elocutionary practice without the whole system gaining wonderfully in physical health and vigour. I might quote many high medical authorities in support of this assertion, but I will content myself with only citing one; for it is a name of one of the highest authority on such subjects, you will admit, when I tell you it is the name of that eminent physician and accom-

plished man who passed away from us but so recently, the late Sir Henry Holland. In Sir Henry Holland's "Medical Notes," at p. 422, I read as follows:—

"Might not more be done in practice towards *the prevention of pulmonary disease*, as well as for the general improvement of health by *expressly exercising the organs of respiration*—that is by practising according to method those actions of the body through which the chest is in part filled or emptied of air? Though suggestions to this effect occur in some of our best works on consumption, as well as in the writings of certain continental physicians, they have hitherto had less than their due influence, and the principle as such is comparatively little recognized, or brought into general application. In truth, common usage takes for the most part a directly opposite course; and, under the notion or pretext of quiet, seeks to repress all direct exercise of this important function in those who are presumed to have any tendency to pulmonary disorders. . . . As regards the modes of exercising the function of respiration, they should be various, to suit the varying powers and exigencies of the patient. *Reading aloud (clara lectio)* is one of very ancient recommendation, the good effects of which are not limited to this object alone. It might indeed be well were the practice of distinct *recitation*, such as implies a certain *effort* of the organs beyond that of mere ordinary speech, more generally used in early life, and continued as a habit, or regular exercise, *but especially by those whose chests are weak*, and who cannot sustain stronger exertions. Even singing may for the same reasons be allowed in many such cases, but within much narrower limits, and under much more cautious notice of the effects than would be requisite in reading. If such caution be duly used as to posture, articulation, and the avoidance of all excess, *these regular exercises of the voice may be rendered as salutary to the organs of respiration as they are*

*agreeable in their influence on the ordinary voice.* The common course of education is much at fault in this respect. If some small part of the time given to crowding facts on the mind not yet prepared to receive or retain them were employed in fashioning and improving the organs of speech under good tuition, and with suitable subjects for recitation, both mind and body would often gain materially by the substitution."

I might quote opinions to precisely the same effect from the works on consumption and other diseases of the respiratory organs, of Dr. James Bright., Dr. Godwin Timms, Combe, Mayo, and other eminent physicians and physiologists, but there is no need to multiply quotations; suffice it to say that all these high medical authorities concur in the same opinion, viz., that "reading aloud" is, when conducted on sound principles, an exercise for the delicate and for the robust, as healthy and strengthening to the body as it is pleasant and profitable to the mind.

Some time since a benevolent gentleman, aware of the importance of good reading, and anxious to encourage the study of the art, liberally made an offer to both our great Universities to found a prize of the annual value of £40 to be given to the best reader. After, I believe, some hesitation, the offer was accepted by Cambridge, and the results, I understand, have been very encouraging. But, up to the present time, Oxford has declined the proffered gift. I have no authority to state the grounds of the rejection, but I have reason to believe it was on account of the alleged difficulty of deciding to whom, at the times of competition, the prize for good reading should be awarded. Now I must confess to failing to see the soundness of this objection, when we have had for for so many years at King's College the establishment of classes for cultivating the art of public reading, and of annually awarding prizes for proficiency. And certainly

here there has been very little, if any, difficulty in deciding at the examination who was the student to whom such prize should be awarded. On more than one occasion I believe two students have been found equal in point of merit, and then the council of King's College have generously given two prizes. If such an occurrence happened at the University of Oxford, surely the prize of £40 might be divided between the two competitors. I can only hope that in a short time Oxford may be induced to reconsider her decision, and follow the course taken by her sister University of Cambridge.

But Time warns me that I must draw these introductory remarks to a close. I have viewed the subject of elocution under various aspects, and I have endeavoured to show why it is well worthy of being studied for the sake of its good results on others, and also for your own sakes personally. And I trust I have said enough to prove that the hours you will spend here in the study and practice of the art of public reading and speaking will be hours neither wasted nor misapplied.

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*Lecturer on Public Reading and Speaking, King's College, London, Evening Classes Department.*

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## PRESS NOTICES

### ON MR. PLUMPTRE'S LAST EDITION OF "KING'S COLLEGE LECTURES ON ELOCUTION."

In Indian Institutions we labour under difficulties in regard to pronunciation which it is hard to combat. The native student enters upon the study of the English language just as an Englishman would undertake the study of French or German: to both the language is foreign. Under such circumstances the importance of the purest and most effective mode of pronunciation cannot be overrated. But if it is difficult for Indian students to learn the proper pronunciation of single words, it is still more difficult for them to learn how to pronounce those words when they are arranged into sentences. And here immediately arises the necessity of encouraging instruction in that art of which Mr. Plumptre is as complete a master as a teacher. In language as simple as it is emphatic Mr. Plumptre proves beyond a doubt why elocution should be

studied by all persons of both sexes, and his arguments must be read to be appreciated. It is a melancholy fact that, while in England there are not wanting masters of almost every art and science, few are to be found, even in that abode of vigour and wisdom, who can justly appreciate and effectually practise the noble art of expressing their thoughts in speech as vigorously as they can conceive and write them. We quite agree with the learned author that perfect elocution owes much to talent and nature; but we also concur in his opinion that, to acquire proficiency in the art, our natural capacities require to be fostered by assiduous cultivation. Those who neglect the study on the score that as a natural gift it cannot be acquired put forward, they forget, but a lame excuse for their own indolence and apathy. As our readers will see, we have but briefly glanced at the instructive work before us. On another occasion we hope to lead our readers more deeply into the various subjects that Mr. Plumptre discusses; and we do not hesitate to say that any one who wishes to gain an insight into the masterly thoughts of the eloquent writer would be amply repaid by a perusal of Mr. Plumptre's King's College Lectures on Elocution.—"*Western Star*" (*India*), *Jan.*, 1871.

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Mr. Plumptre has now for several years fulfilled with signal ability the duties devolving upon him as the Lecturer upon Public Reading and Speaking at King's College, London, in the Evening Classes Department. Happily he has afforded us, one and all, the opportunity for judging of him, not merely by hearsay—of estimating him not simply by the range or scope of his reputation. He has now given to the outer public the means of weighing in the balance his various capabilities as an instructor in elocution. He has, in the shape of a goodly volume of 200 pages octavo, presented to every one who lists a series of fourteen of these famous King's College Lectures of his on Elocution—fourteen subdivisions of a most instructive and comprehensive theme—the substance of the Introductory Course of Lectures and Practical Instruction he has now for some time past been annually delivering. The book is dedicated, by permission, to H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. It is followed by two very remarkable appendices—one of them singularly instructive, the other very curiously interesting. So far as any merely printed book on elocution could accomplish its object, this one by Mr. Plumptre is entitled to our highest commendation. The eye, the face, the voice, the gesture, are of course all wanting, but the argument throughout is so lucid in itself, while the illustrations of that argument are so animated and so singularly felicitous, that reading the work attentively page by page and lecture by lecture is the next best thing to seeing and hearing the gifted professor himself, when he is, in his own person, exemplifying the manifold and ever-varying charms of the all-conquering art of the Rhetorician and Elocutionist.—"*Sun*," *March* 5, 1870.

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This, although not a law book, is a book for lawyers. Practical treatises on various branches of the law may be essential to store the mind of the advocate with ideas, but unless he has the power of expressing them in such a way as to command the attention of the court, his learning will prove of but little avail. To a barrister the brains are of but little use without the tongue, and even the tongue, however fluent, may fail to give due expression to the ideas, unless the voice is properly regulated so as to pronounce with both clearness and force the words that are uttered, and the gestures of the body enforce what the language has attempted to impress. Many are the failures of those who would otherwise have been successful advocates from want of attention to the

principles of elocution. Their matter has been excellent, but their manner has been so bad as entirely to destroy the effect that their address must otherwise have produced. We would point to instances of the kind in Parliament, at the Bar, and in the Pulpit. To all such persons the work before us will be found invaluable; and, indeed, there are few, if any, whose duties require them to speak in public, who will fail to derive advantage from its perusal. The subject is treated in a thoroughly practical manner, and is fully investigated with care and judgment. Mr. Plumptre speaks with the authority of a professor, and he appears to understand his subject entirely, and in all its different branches. He is quite aware of all the difficulties to be encountered, and is ready with advice how to meet them. His work evinces considerable research, extensive classical and general knowledge, and is, moreover, full of interesting matter. We commend it heartily alike to those who aspire to become orators in Parliament, to the Clergy, and to the Bar.—"*Quarterly Law Review*," *May*, 1870.

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In these days, when Lectures and "Penny Readings" are patronized by the "upper ten thousand," and Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Baronets, M.P.'s, and Esquires take part in them, and when at public dinners no one is supposed to be "unaccustomed to public speaking," it is highly desirable that those who appear on the platform, or who rise at public banquets, should be able to go through their parts satisfactorily. To accomplish this there are only two ways, one, to take lessons in elocution, the other, to read works published with a view of imparting as much practical instruction as can possibly be imparted by precept, where practice cannot be attained. Mr. C. J. Plumptre, Lecturer at King's College, London, has just published a volume upon the Principles and Practice of Elocution, which will be found to be of the highest value to every one who is called on, either constantly or at intervals, to speak in public. As a teacher Mr. Plumptre is most skilful: he is a *master of his art*, and those who cannot avail themselves of his services will do well to study his treatise, which is lucid, sound, and practical. The "King's College Lectures" of Mr. Plumptre have been honoured by the patronage of the Prince of Wales, to whom the volume is by permission dedicated.—"*Court Journal*," *December*, 11, 1869.

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Mr. Plumptre will be known to most of our readers as a very scientific and successful teacher of elocution; and in this volume he has put forth the substance of the course of lectures that he delivers at King's College, with such alterations and additions as may meet the wants of those who are unable to avail themselves of oral instruction. It is unnecessary to enlarge upon the advantage of obtaining complete command of all the powers of the voice, or to point out how very much a good manner of delivery may promote the success of a medical practitioner. These considerations are obvious; and if they stood alone we should hardly have thought the lectures within our province as reviewers. We find, however, that Mr. Plumptre enters at length, and with much ability, into the curative treatment of impediments of speech. We have perused this portion of the treatise with great care, and have much pleasure in bearing testimony to its great merit. The views advanced rest upon sound physiology, and the practice advocated is in complete accordance with them. Mr. Plumptre states, and our experience enables us to confirm his opinion, that *all cases* of *stammering* and *stuttering* are *curable*, if only the patient will exercise a certain degree of care and perseverance. It is

common for medical practitioners to be consulted about such impediments; and we feel sure that in Mr. Plumptre's lectures they will find not only much *valuable practical information*, but also a *basis of sound principles*, upon which the details of treatment may be founded. We recommend the book very warmly to our readers.—"*Lancet*," *February* 12, 1870.

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Professor Plumptre, who is so well known for his elocutionary powers, has just published a volume of fourteen of his lectures on elocution, delivered some time since at King's College, London. The book is a handsome volume of more than 200 pages, and is dedicated to the Prince of Wales. A more entertaining work it would be difficult to find, and it is one which we cordially recommend to the student of divinity, the barrister, and the debater; in a word, to all who desire to cultivate the faculty of speech, and to be able to express their ideas with clearness, force, and elegance.—"*Irish Gazette*," *March* 19, 1870.

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Every one ought to cultivate the art of reading; for though, perhaps, persons may not be required to speak in public, few people escape the task of reading aloud for the benefit of their own family and friends. What a difference it makes if this is done effectively, and how few are able to read with proper energy, correctness, and variety! This is not a book to review, but to recommend to those who are cultivated enough to appreciate the advantages of good reading and speaking. It contains the best possible directions for the management and modulation of the voice.—"*Victoria Magazine*," *April*, 1870.

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Mr. Plumptre gives in his valuable work a series of practical suggestions which will be most useful to the student, whether he may be preparing for the pulpit, the bar, or the platform.—"*Oxford University Herald*," *October*, 1870.

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These Introductory Lectures by Mr. Plumptre are most lucidly illustrative of the principles and practice of that art of elocution of which he is himself, in both senses, a master, particularly of elocution considered in reference to the learned professions and to Parliament. Mr. Plumptre appears with admirable credentials before his pupils at the University, and before all those who, either in Oxford or in London, may aspire, under his able tuition, to prepare themselves by an elocution course for the the Church, for the Bar, or for Parliament. He is himself a barrister, and is the hon. secretary of the Public Reading Society of which Lord Brougham is the president. As one of the most accomplished readers of that society, he has frequently had occasion to signalize here, in the metropolis, his capabilities as an elocutionist—capabilities naturally very considerable, but beyond that, by study and practice admirably cultivated. —"*Sun*," *March* 20.

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This volume contains lectures, delivered by Mr. Plumptre, designed to impress upon his audience the importance of aequiring the art of elocution. In that region his remarks were properly directed to the clergy and the students for the Church; but all that he said about the value, nay, the necessity for learning to speak and read, and his contention that it was quite as much an art to be studied as singing, drawing,

or any other accomplishment, are equally applicable to our own profession. Certainly a tolerable speaker is not quite so rare among the lawyers as a tolerable reader among the clergy, but we must admit that good reading or speaking is still very rare in either branch of the profession. Even barristers, whose express business it is to speak, rarely deem it necessary to make a study of the art they are to practise every day of their lives. The solicitors have more excuse for the neglect of it, for they are not necessarily called on to speak; they may escape if they will, though they are always looked to as the proper persons to sustain a discussion in a public meeting, and a lawyer who cannot talk is not held in the same public estimation as one who can. Our own opinion of the importance of making a study of the arts of reading and speaking is best shown by our endeavour to assist those who may desire to attain those accomplishments with such hints as experience and study have suggested. If any doubt the utility of, or even the necessity for, this acquirement, let them read Mr. Plumptre's little volume, and it will convince them. . . . We believe that a great stimulus has been given to the subject in Oxford by these lectures, and their wider diffusion will, we hope, produce equally good results, not only among the lawyers, but among the general public.—"*The Law Times*," *April* 27.

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A lucid summary of a course of sound and practical lectures on elocution. . . . The glimpse of his system which they enable us to obtain gives us a very high idea of Mr. Plumptre's skill and method as a teacher, and we heartily wish him success in his zealous attempt to secure an adequate recognition of this important but most universally neglected branch of a liberal education.—"*Spectator*," *March* 16.

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Mr. Plumptre's lectures are here published in a condensed form, so as to impart as much practical instruction as can be conveyed in a manner necessarily imperfect . . . We intend now to give an analysis of what is here advanced, not only because the experiment is an important one in its probable results, but also because of the valuable practical information which this little volume conveys.—"*Clerical Journal*," *April* 9.

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Mr. Plumptre's lectures are sound and practical, entering not only into the principles but the practice of elocution; and they will be found to be of great value by the young clergyman or barrister, and, indeed, by every educated gentlemen who is called on, either constantly, or at intervals, to speak in public—and who is not? Mr. Plumptre suggests the establishment of a professorship of elocution at Oxford, a step which certainly seems to us a move in the right direction.—"*The Oriental Budget*," *July*.

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The neglect of the art of public speaking has always been a just reproach to this country, when, by the form of the government, every one has an equal chance of reaching the highest honours in the state. This crying neglect, it will be seen by the title of the above work, the author has attempted to correct, and that by a series of lectures, in which the subject is handled in all its branches, and in a most admirable and perspicuous manner. Mr. Plumptre has literally left nothing to be desired, so clearly and so ably has he conveyed his sentiments and opinions on this question. We have great pleasure in rendering our unqualified praise both of the style and composition of this very useful work.—"*The Era*," *August* 4.

This treatise embodies the substance of a course of introductory lectures on the principles and practice of elocution, delivered in Oxford during the Michaelmas term of last year. The author is well and favourably known here, as well as in London, where his efforts as a teacher of this most valuable art have been highly appreciated, and attended with gratifying success. . . . Mr. Plumptre is evidently a master of the art, and we strongly recommend his treatise to all to whom the subject upon which it treats can be of the least service.—"*Oxford University Herald*," *March* 9.

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Mr. Plumptre is thoroughly proficient in the elocutionary art, and his book will be found extremely useful to all who are in any way likely to take part in public life.—"*Oxford Chronicle*," *March* 2.

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Having so recently expressed our opinion on the merits of Mr. Plumptre's lectures, and on his abilities as an elocutionist, we need not do more on the present occasion than cordially to recommend his book to the notice of our readers.—"*Oxford Journal*," *March* 2.

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. . . We now turn to Mr. Plumptre's volume of Lectures, and although its main object is to show the value and necessity of elocution, and to announce that he intends to devote some of his time both in London and Oxford to the instruction of the clergy and others in this important but neglected branch of their education, the following extracts will be read with interest, and will be found to be of of much use to our readers.—"*The English Churchman*," *September* 12.

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[*From the "Institute and Lecturers' Gazette" for November*, 1873.]

"THE CULTURE OF SPEECH."

Judging from the highly laudatory notices which have appeared in *The Times*, *The Daily News*, and other leading organs of the press, on the opening address on "Elocution considered in reference to Public and Social Life," delivered at King's College, London, on Tuesday night, October 7, by Mr. C. J. Plumptre, Lecturer on Public Reading and Speaking, in the Evening Classes Department of King's College, greater public attention has been drawn to the importance of the subject discussed than on any former occasion when Mr. Plumptre has opened his classes at that great Institution with his usual annual public lecture.

*The Times* of October 11, after some prefatory remarks on the Lecture, goes on to say—"Mr. Plumptre enlarged upon the many uses of accurate and cultivated speech, not only in the public advocacy of opinions and in the transaction of public business, but also in domestic life, from which he proposed to banish the familiar but often annoying forms of interrogation—"I beg your pardon," "What did you say?" &c. and then explained that a knowledge and practice of the best methods of filling the lungs and of exerting the vocal organs was not only conducive to the comfort of the audience, but also to that of the speaker or reader himself, who might thus be enabled to use the voice with great power and for considerable periods of time without appreciable fatigue, and especially without that dryness of the tongue and throat which compel unskilled orators to seek frequent assistance from the conventional water-bottle. He sup-

ported his views and arguments by many quotations from writers and speakers of eminence, among others from the Archbishop of York, who, in distributing prizes at King's College, had laid much stress upon the importance of training in elocution, not only the clergy, but their often afflicted congregations. Sir Arthur Helps was cited in support of the value of the art as a branch of education, and Sir Henry Holland to show the salutary effect of proper vocal exercise upon the lungs. The lecturer concluded a very interesting discourse amid the hearty applause of his hearers."

*The Daily News* of October 10 gives a very full report of the same lecture, which we give *in extenso* in another column.

*The Lancet* of October 18 has also an excellent article on the subjects of Mr. Plumptre's lecture, but of course regards it almost entirely from the medical point of view, and says if elocution were only cultivated by those who most need it "*Clergyman's sore-throat*" would cease to exist; and laryngeal and bronchial affections generally would be diminished if the vocal organs received early and adequate training. The Greeks and Romans were much in advance of us as elocutionists. Contrast the divine in the pulpit with the Roman orator as he is pictured in antique gems; the square, precise, semi-animate bearing in the one case, with the easy sway of the person in the other. Reading aloud (*clara lectio*) after meals was recommended as an aid to digestion by the Roman physicians; and justly, for reading as they practised it meant the dilation of the chest, the full, deep respiration, the rise and fall of the diaphragm, the mental exhilaration which the vocal utterance of exalted ideas implies. The dryness of the throat, the breakdown from huskiness, the undignified recourse to the water-bottle, so common to our platforms, were unknown to them. We have still some things to learn from antiquity, and the use of the voice, with its accompaniment of appropriate gesture in public speaking, is one of them.

Even "*Punch*," in his issue of October 18, lends his efficient though humorous aid to "The Culture of Speech" in the following paragraph:—"Mr. Plumptre, the celebrated Elocutionist, declares his desire to teach everybody to speak plainly and distinctly, and so to banish from use the phrase "I beg your pardon" and "What did you say?" He will do good service. Nobody has more right to mumble, so that one has difficulty in hearing him, than he has to write badly, so that one has difficulty in reading him. But Mr. Plumptre, as a man of the world, must know that, as *Falstaff* says, there is such a malady as not marking. He must also know that many carnally-wise people cause a speech to be repeated, that they may gain more time to consider their answer. These nuisances cannot be cured even by Mr. Plumptre's excellent teaching. As to the first, it may be noticed that a man seldom fails to hear, when anybody he deems his superior, or from whom he is trying to gain anything, is talking to him; and therefore his inattention on other occasions is an insolence. As for the Fabian, he is to be baffled and disconcerted by making your second speech utterly unlike your first, and thus "selling" him, when his painful grin of discontent will pleasingly confess his dodge. We would supplement Mr. Plumptre's endeavours with these suggestions, and we most heartily wish him all success."

Certainly the extracts we have given above show that the culture of speech has received an impetus from some of the leading organs of public opinion in the daily and weekly press, greater than it has met with for a long time past; and we rejoice to see that the subject of Elocution in Public and Social Life has met with the attention it deserves.

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# MR. CHARLES J. PLUMPTRE,

## LECTURER ON PUBLIC READING AND SPEAKING, KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON, EVENING CLASSES DEPARTMENT,

BEGS to announce that he Lectures and gives practical instruction in Public Reading and Speaking to his classes at King's College, every Tuesday and Friday Evening, from 8 till 9, during the Winter Session (beginning in October and ending in April), and every Tuesday in the Summer Session (beginning in April and ending in June), from 6.30 to 8 P.M., and to his classes at University College every Thursday at 8 P.M. Private pupils and classes for instruction and practice in all the various branches of Elocution are received by Mr. PLUMPTRE from October till August, at his residence, No. 36, Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood, N.W.

Special arrangements are also made for the reception of pupils suffering under any Impediments of Speech, Defective Articulation, or "Clerical Sore Throat."

Arrangements are also made with Institutions, Colleges, and Schools, for a repetition of the substance of Mr. PLUMPTRE'S King's College course of Lectures, combined with practical instruction in the art of Reading Aloud and other branches of Elocution.

Courses of Lectures and practical instruction in Elocution are also given by Mr. PLUMPTRE at Ladies' Colleges and Schools, and two days in the week are devoted to receiving Ladies as private pupils at his residence.

Secretaries of Literary Institutions, &c., are requested to address all applications for Readings and Lectures to Mr. PLUMPTRE'S private residence, 36, Hamilton Terrace, St. John's Wood, London, N.W.

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