

his conclusion with a severe and jealous hand. Its object is only to place the truth which has been explained or proved in contact with the heart and conscience. Every word which exceeds this is an excrescence. When once the truth has found full access to the hearer's soul, the best possible thing to be done is to leave it there performing its own work. Protracting the discourse beyond this point only undoes what has been already effected. One object of the conclusion is to awaken emotion. Remember that vehement affections are never long sustained.¹ When the conviction has once invested itself with strong feeling in the soul of the auditor, that is the propitious moment to dismiss him to his own meditations. If he is then detained, the emotion will speedily subside, and with it the impression. The most important thing, therefore, is that you know when to stop, and that you be sure to stop when you have done.²

¹ Quintil., L. vi., c. i., § 27, 28. "Nec sine causa dictum est; 'Nihil facilius quam lacrimas inarescere.' Nam, quum etiam veros dolores mitiget tempus, citius evanescat necesse est illa, quam dicendo effinximus, imago; in qua si moramur, lacrimis fatigatur auditor, et requiescit, et ab illo quem ceperat impetu, ad rationem redit. 29. Non patiamur igitur frigescere hoc opus, et affectum quum ad summum perduximus, relinquamus; nec speremus fore, ut aliena quisquam diu ploret. Ideoque quum in aliis, tum maxime in hac parte, debet crescere oratio; quia quicquid non adjicit prioribus, etiam detrahare videtur; et facile deficit affectus qui descendit."

² A shrewd and caustic Frenchman once uttered the following criticism upon the vice against which I warn you. If the image is homely, the sarcasm is not more biting than the folly deserves: "Your American orator is very ingenious and fluent, but his conclusion is too much like that of the pointer dog, who when he wishes to sleep turns around and around, following his own tail, and at last lies down just where he began."