

Posture, Action, Gesture, etc.

with a dignified air, as if he had communicated inestimable information to a highly favoured body of individuals who might reasonably be expected to rise in a state of intense excitement and express their overwhelming sense of obligation. Nothing has been said beyond the merest schoolboy talk; but the air of dignity, the attitude of authority, the very tone of the man, all show how thoroughly satisfied he is. This is not laborious preaching, but it occurs to me to mention it because it is the very reverse, and is so much more to be condemned. A few simpletons are, no doubt, imposed upon, and fancy that a man must be saying something great when he delivers himself in a pompous manner; but sensible persons are at first amused and afterwards disgusted with the **big manner, à la grand seigneur.**

One of the great advantages of our College training is the certainty that an inflated mannerism is sure to be abated by the amiable eagerness with which all our students delight in rescuing a brother from this peril. Many wind-bags have collapsed in this room beneath your tender handling, never, I hope, to be puffed out to their former dimensions. There are some in the ministry of all the churches who would be marvellously benefited by a little of the very candid if not savage criticisms which have been endured by budding orators at your hands. I would that every minister who has missed such an instructive martyrdom could find a friend sufficiently honest to point out to him any oddities of manner into which he may insensibly have fallen.

But, here we must not overlook another laborious orator who is in our mind's eye. We will name him the perpetual motion preacher, who is all action, and lifts his finger, or waves his hand, or strikes his palm at every word. He is never at rest for a moment. So eager is he to be emphatic that he effectually defeats his object, for where every word is emphasized by a gesture nothing whatever is emphatic. This brother takes off men's minds from his words to his movements: the eye actually carries the thoughts away from the ear, and so a second time the preacher's end is missed.

This continual motion greatly agitates some hearers, and gives them the fidgets, and no wonder, for who can endure to see such incessant patting, and pointing, and waving? In action, as well as everything else, 'let your moderation be known unto all men.'