

Stump-Orator

by Thomas Carlyle

Can it be doubtful that this is still the rule of human education; that the human creature needs first of all to be educated not that he may speak, but that he may have something weighty and valuable to say! If speech is the bank-note for an inward capital of culture, of insight and noble human worth, then speech is precious, and the art of speech shall be honored. But if there *is* no inward capital; if speech represent no real culture of the mind, but an imaginary culture; no bullion, but the fatal and now almost hopeless deficit of such? Alas, also said bank-note is then a *forged* one; passing freely current in the market; but bringing damages to the receiver, to the payer, and to all the world, which are in sad truth infallible, and of amount incalculable. Few think of it at present; but the truth remains forever so. In parliaments and other loud assemblages, your eloquent talk, *dis*-united from Nature and her facts, is taken as wisdom and the correct image of said facts: but Nature well knows what it is, Nature will not have it as such, and will reject your forged note one day, with huge costs. The foolish traders in the market pass it freely, nothing doubting, and rejoice in the dexterous execution of the piece: and so it circulates from hand to hand, and from class to class. . . .

from *Latter-day Pamphlets*