

It is really necessary to hear Mr Stuart rather than read him. When he speaks he is transfigured before you. The placid power of the man gives place to elemental energy. Both aspects remind one of the sea. It seems almost as if he grew physically much bigger. His personality fills the room. I have heard many of the great orators of the day, never one with one tithe of the passion and power of Mr Stuart. Ben Tillett comes nearest. But Ben Tillett wastes his power in furious gesture. With Mr Stuart the thunder of his tread and of his voice shake the house; but there is no loss of self-control. The speech is not diffuse, but extraordinarily concise and emphatic. The words rush out like molten steel from a converter under the blast. But each phrase is succinct and concentrated. For this reason, perhaps, he could never make a popular speaker. People like to have a man drone on pleasantly for an hour or so with mild excitement. They do not care to be swept away or crushed by real eloquence. Yet this is the kind of speech which has always moved men from the beginning of the world, and always will. It cannot be prolonged. Twenty minutes of it, and the nerve-force of every hearer would be exhausted. He would be mad to get up and do something; and that something would be what Mr Stuart told him. But the old ideal of oratory has passed. Mark Antony's speech would be rather bad form. People do not want to be moved to do more than pass a nicely worded resolution. But if a real crisis should arise in the affairs of the nation, then would come the moment of the genuine prophet. With a force not his own,