

tion, for if his apparently threatening attitude and demeanour make you think him hostile, and you "jump upon him," you will possibly make him an enemy for life. An unfortunately jocular retort to a deadly earnest crank who had not passed through the surgical operation once brought about a three-cornered contest in which I had to fight my usual Tory opponent as well as a plausible and voluble windbag, who was speedily pricked and collapsed dismally at the contest. If, on the other hand, you are convinced that your examiner belongs to the other camp and has come with the intention of tripping you up, show him no mercy, but knock him down flat and jump upon him; and if you can succeed in turning the laugh against him, you will have the audience with you, and score all along the line. Now, for all this I was very imperfectly equipped. I had few ideas and by no means a copious vocabulary at the start, and my nerve was so poorly screwed up that I sometimes felt as though a sudden evaporating of mental processes would leave me speechless. But before the contest was over I had developed such an exuberant and unnatural fluency that I could rear myself into the erect posture without the flicker of a quail, and talk coherently as long as was necessary without the slightest reference to my paper. But, alas, alas! when I descended from my platform to the flat level of ordinary ground, I found that I had thrown back pretty much to my original condition, and that the temporary exuberance of rhetoric had to give way to the somewhat sticky kind of speech with which I began my oratorical campaign. More up-to-date candidates start life on much better terms with themselves and their audience. They have spouted at school debating societies and college unions, and when they get out of leading-strings they join the Eighty Club or the Primrose League, and get their sea-legs and the convenient glibness of tongue which only