

Darwin, in his last work on the "Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals," tells the following extraordinary story of bashfulness:—  
"A small dinner-party was given in honour of an extremely shy man, who, when he rose to return thanks, rehearsed the speech, which he had evidently learnt by heart, in absolute silence, and did not utter a single word; but he acted as if he were speaking with much emphasis. His friends, perceiving how the case stood, loudly applauded the imaginary bursts of eloquence, whenever his gestures indicated a pause, and the man never discovered that he had remained the whole time completely silent. On the contrary, he afterwards remarked to my friend, with much satisfaction, that he thought he had succeeded uncommonly well." Without being able to say honestly that I believe this tale, I have no hesitation in asserting that I would much rather hear (if I may be allowed the expression) the gentleman's silent speech than many after-dinner speeches it has been my unhappy fate to have had to listen to. That he thought, on sitting down, he had done extremely well (which appears to constitute the height of Mr. Darwin's astonishment) in no way surprises me. I scarcely ever knew anyone, after making a particularly bad post-prandial speech, who did not sit down under precisely that same impression. Perhaps it's the salmon.