

## EASE IN CONVERSATION.

Many a girl, intelligent, educated, as our ideas go, is mortified by her lack of ease in conversation. She finds other girls inferior in actual ability, ever ready in the shifting round game we call small-talk, and is forced to the conclusion that shallowness is the passport to social favour. But she is mistaken; she is simply in the condition of a person over-loaded with large bills when there is need for a little small change.

There is one great reason for this lack of conversational power: in too many cases the art is never practised inside the home circle. No attempt at pleasant converse is ever made save when visitors are present: the various members of the family may gossip a little, or discuss purely personal affairs, but they make no attempt at entertaining talk. In point of fact, the art of conversation is like a game of battledore and shuttlecock; one needs the quickness and dexterity of constant practice.

In many busy households the only general gathering of the family is at meal-time—a time above all others when worry should be banished, if only for the sake of physical comfort. Yet this is the very time when the mother will complain of domestic worry, the father of business cares, and the daughters of shabby frocks. All this should be changed: it ought to be a rule in all households that disagreeables are to be banished at meal-time. Do not imperil your digestion by eating while you are in an irritated and discontented frame of mind. Pleasant talk, relieved by an occasional laugh, will be more beneficial than pounds of pills.

Each member of the family should come to the table prepared to say something pleasant. Any bright little story or merry joke, or any bit of the world's news that will loosen the tongues and cause animated talk—how it will increase the brightness of a working day! There need be no profound discussions, no hobby riding; it should be lively touch-and-go talk. Let the girls talk just a bit about gowns and chiffons if they will; let the boys talk athletics, for in this family parliament every one should have a right to be heard. But let the general range be of the newspaper order—what all the world is doing. It is far better to discuss the delinquencies of powers and potentates than of our neighbours; and she who keeps herself acquainted with the doings of all great people and places, cannot be provincial, however narrow her horizon.

Now, there is one fact to note especially—he who wants topics of conversation must read the newspapers. There is no doubt that newspapers and periodicals are most useful in giving subjects for general conversation. The information thus gleaned is both timely and popular—just what one needs in society. General information of a popular type is the prime requisite for easy conversation, and

when to this is added good temper and the ability to appreciate a joke, there should be no complaint of inability to talk with fluency and ease.

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