matician and philosopher; Lafontain, celebrated for his witty fables; and Buffon, the great naturalist, were all singulary deficient in the powers of conversation.—Marmontel, the novelist, was so dull in society that a friend said of him, after an interview: "I must go and read his tales to recompense myself for the weariness of hearing him."

As to Corneille, the greatest dramatist of France, he was completely lost in society—so absent and embarrassed that he wrote of himself a witty couplet, importing that he was never intelligible but through the mouth of another. Wit on paper seems to be something widely different from that play of words in conversation, which, while it sparkles, dies; for Charles II., the wittiest monarch that ever sat on the English throne, was so charmed with the humor of "Hudibras" that he caused himself to be introduced in the character of a private gentleman to Butler, its author. The witty king found the author a very dull companion, and was of opinion, with many others, that so stupid a fellow could never have written so clever a book. Addison, whose classical elegance of style has long been considered the best model for young writers, was shy and absent in society, preserving, even before a single stranger, stiff and dignified silence. He was accustomed to say there could be no real conversation but between two persons, friends, and that it was then thinking aloud. Steel, Swift, Pope, and Congreve—men possessing literary and conversational powers of the highest order—allowed him to have been a delightful compan[illegible] among intimates; and Young writes of him that "he was rather mute in society on some occasions, but when he began to be company he was full of vivacity, and went on in a noble strain of thought and language, so as to chain the attention of every one to him." Goldsmith, on the contrary, as described by his contemporary writers, appeared in company to have no spark of that genius which shone forth so brightly in his works. His address was awkward, his manner uncouth, his language unpolished; he hesitated in speaking, and was always unhappy if the conversation did not turn upon himself. Dr. Johnson spoke of him as an inspired idiot; yet the great essayist, though delivering oracles to those around him in pompous phrases, which have been happily described as spoken in the Johnsonese tongue, was not entitled to be called a good converser.

Nearer to our own time, we have many authors whose faculty told twice. Sheridan and Theodore Hook were fellows of infinite jest; they could "set a table in a roar," and fill pages with pathos and wit of such a quality that it makes their survivors think "we could have spared better men." Burns was famous for his colloquial powers; and Galt is said to have been as skillful as the story-tellers of the East in fixing the attention of his auditors on his prolonged narrations. Coleridge was in the habit of pouring forth brilliant unbroken monologues of two or three hours' duration to listeners so enchanted that,like Adam, whose ears were filled with the eloquence of an archangel, they forgot "all place—all seasons, and their change;" but this was not conversation, and few might venture to emulate that "old man eloquent" with hopes of equal success. Washington Irving, in the account he has given of his visit to Abbotsford, says of Sir Walter Scott that his conversation was frank, hearty, picturesque and dramatic. He never talked for effect and display, but from the flow of his spirits, the stores of his memory, and the vigor of his imagination. He was as good a listener as a thinker; appreciated everything that others said, however humble might be their rank and pretentions, and was quick to testify his perception of any point in their discourse. No one's concerns, no one's thoughts and opinions, no one's tastes and pleasures seemed beneath him. He made himself so thoroughly the companion of those with whom he happened to be, that they forgot, for a time, his vast superiority, and only recollected and wondered, when all was over, that it was Scott with whom they had been on such familiar terms, in whose society they had felt so perfectly at ease.

SUMMER SHOWERS.

Here they come! dashing down like liquid sheets of silver, and then in crystal jets, as if trying the effect of their restorative powers upon Nature. The red lips of our roses drink the cooling libation with eagerness; and those buds, which have been pouting upon their parent stems so long, are now bursting forth into such *sweet* smiles as only rose-buds can display when coaxed into good humor by such a shower as this.

There is rare poetry in the country now, and "unwritten music," too. Down in the valley, yonder, is the richest carpet of velvety green that you ever saw, and now there are little mimic lakes, shining like silver, all over it. I think that this shower was purposely sent to make Nature appreciate herself, by taking a view of her varied charms in the aforesaid "looking-glasses," which are flung down in such promiscuous confusion. The woods are "delightful in their summer garb, and I can hardly bear to think of the coming winter, when they will resume those drab surtouts, closely "buttoned up to the chin."

A beautiful panorama is exhibiting in the West. The sun smiled very pleasantly upon his audience for a few moments, and then, blushing like a modest artist, as he is, hastened down behind the distant hills, and I can see nothing now but the waving of his gorgeous scarf, as it sweeps their brows. He has such odd ways of coloring and framing his pictures! Very *original* in style, though,—none can deny that. Now see those huge bales of cotton, piled upon each other so carelessly. Those waves of amber are trying to heave them out of the way, for there comes a troop of the brightest clouds—vermillion-tinted, ruby, and the softest pink, with lacing of gold. They seem like a happy band of children in holiday attire, with blue sashes and bronzed sandals. A moment they bow to us from the gorgeously decorated stage, then gracefully retire, and a new party glides into their places. So swiftly do these scenes pass before my eyes, that I have time to note but few particulars. The whole seems like fragments of a heavenly vision; and once I thought the "shining gates" were visible.

What do I behold now! A sober train of drab garmented clouds are walking along the horizon, and what are they bearing away,—urns? Yes! They press them to their hearts, and I know that those urns contain the ashes of all that gorgeous pageant, which drew forth my admiration just now. They are carrying them back to the artist, that he may fan them into new life to-morrow's dawn. A. P. D.

Marshall, Mich., 1860.

☞ Dare to be singular, when you see all around you to be wrong.

☞ Satire should not be like a saw, but like a sword—it should cut, not mangle.

A Lover's Conundrum.—Why is love like a canal boat? Because it is an internal transport.