

example of Tabletalk at its best. The faithful Boswell was present, and did her best to catch the main ideas, but alas! bringing such a Talk to the realm of Printers' Ink is like carrying a snowflake into a warm room,—the delicate crystallization is more or less extinguished in amorphous darkness.

After an introductory remark on the temerity of a "mere man" venturing to address the Levana on such a subject, he spoke of college life, and what it ought to mean to each. It surely ought to increase our resources in every way, and especially in this one line of conversation. Social life is not a matter of occasional occurrence, but is continuous, and one's influence is inconceivably greater in almost every case through the medium of conversation than through that of writing. The occasional great man writes, but the millions talk, and on this airy foundation is built the structure of society, in its narrower sense at least. To be sure, where conversational power languishes, those who entertain are forced to adopt such expedients as cards or dancing, which are really rather mechanical devices for covering deficiencies in this line. On the other hand, you can't simply invite people to "please come and talk" on such and such an evening. It would freeze the very tongues in their heads. And so you adopt the expedient of giving a dinner or a "Smoke,"* and the conversation, the real object of the meeting-together, takes care of itself.

The particular *bête-noir* of the practised entertainer is the Bore, the one who monopolises the conversation with his little stream of talk circling round one big capital I.

propos comes the story of Sir Peyton Knightly, who was so fond of talking about his distinguished line of ancestry, that a pained listener, Sir William Harcourt, remarked to a friend near by that he reminded him of the old hymn:

"Nightly to the listening earth
Proclaims the story of his birth."

It has always been characteristic of periods of the greatest intellectual activity that the art of conversation has then flourished luxuriantly. In the Athens of Pericles, in Elizabethan England, in the famous salons of revolutionary Paris, Conversation was a delicate and highly-prized art. And though the monologues of such men as Johnson and Macaulay had their own value, still the finest and best conversation is always reciprocal, and avoids being either bookish on the one hand or too gossipy on the other.

The speaker then touched on the difference between wit and humor. How the former is the spice of conversation, and as such to be used with a sparing hand, the latter more like the milder seasoning of salt, making conversation at once more palatable and more wholesome.

Finally, to bring the matter down to our own day and place, the subject of isolation in an uncongenial community was spoken of. Many a girl in a country village of Ontario or in the plains of the far west, knows what that means. When she attempts to speak of anything beyond the crops and the weather, the people stare or think she is "putting on airs." However, there is always some common ground of interest, and it is her part to find that friendly territory and to act the part of missionary in extend-

*Did the sacred halls of Levana hear that word?—Ed.