

We condole with Rev. James Stevens and his companion, parents of the deceased, and also with Mrs. Stevens, widow of our departed friend and brother, in the great and sad bereavement which has come upon them. In common with them his memory shall be precious to us.

"SMALL TALK."

Many affect to despise "small talk." They laugh at those who can spend half an hour in conversation concerning the weather, the health of their relatives and other subjects of like interest. Severe things are often said by these wise and critical persons; but perhaps, notwithstanding that they consider themselves far-lifted above every such simpleness, their self-gratulation is the outgrowth of shortsightedness. To every one who mingles with all sorts of men, "small talk" is a necessity. Multitudes have not the ability, if they had the inclination, to converse learnedly about philosophy, or gracefully concerning books, or wisely in respect to the probabilities of a general war in Europe. Therefore if a man is able, or willing, to talk only of subjects which are in themselves important, he must, in many instances, do all the talking; for his listeners will be unable to sustain their part. If any man is a Coleridge, and has the gift of *conversational oratory*, he may be allowed to pour forth his immaculate wisdom for the benefit of others, but, as a matter of fact, few men can interest others for a long time. The listener wants a chance to speak that he may air his own opinions or impart some new thing; and if the subject under discussion, or the manner of discussing, allows no such opportunity, *his* interest dies.

Even those who can talk well of great matters, have not, as a rule, a disposition to do so at all times. Occasionally the mind wishes to throw off everything weighty or burdensome. It needs rest. At such times "small talk" is a relief and recreation. It is unreasonable to demand, because any mind is strong, that it shall display its

strength every moment. We like to think of Samson bearing upon his shoulders the gates of Gaza, "bar and all." It was an excellent display of strength. But Samson would have made a ridiculous figure if he had carried those gates about every hour of every day, even though thereby a few little boys had been stimulated to cultivate their muscular powers more perfectly. At times conversation should deal with great things; then vigorous thoughts are appropriate and necessary. But he is to be pitied, who, after placing the gates of Gaza upon his shoulders is unable to lay them down.

As human society is, "small talk" is almost as essential to success as common sense. He whose work is with people in general, needs the ability to talk well about little matters, that he may interest those who can talk of such things only. If he has not this ability he will often be placed in an unfavorable light, and will be thought dull and stupid by those who are intellectually his inferiors. Dr. Johnson has said that the person who has no "small talk" is like a wealthy man who has no small change, and is embarrassed by being unable to pay small debts with hundred pound notes. This figure portrays the necessity clearly, and shows that even those who are intellectually rich should always keep small coins on hand. Therefore all who are busily accumulating treasures of knowledge in order that they may obtain high success in life should by no means fail to supply themselves with small change. They will find it more than convenient.

Gleanings from Acadia Seminary.

(Under direction of the Pierian Society.)

The fourth regular meeting of the Pierian Society was very enthusiastic and enjoyable although many members were absent on account of the furious snow storm.

The chorus "He Leadeth Me," was followed by the Critic's report by Miss Graves, an able, interesting and instructive criticism,