

ed George Eliot to say that, "some folk's tongues are like the clocks as run on strikin', not to tell you the time o' the day, but because there's summat wrong i' their own inside." And Pope had the same row to hoe when he said: "It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles; the less they have in them, the more noise they make in pouring it out."

But to make conversation more than a light, airy social grace, it should have systematic cultivation, and that means primarily something—and a worthy something at that—to talk about. Conversation bound to narrow limits as to subject-matter is apt to degenerate into that abominable stock-in-trade of the ubiquitous Mrs. Grundy—gossip. But the current events, the topics of the time, social, educational, political, religious, furnish a never-ending and intensely interesting variety of subject-matter, the discussion of which is not only conducive to individual but general improvement. The time may have been when scattering settlements on the frontier limited talk to petty personalities, but the time is when the subject-matter of conversation knows no boundaries either of space or time. The field is simply illimitable.

There is another feature of conversation rarely taken into consideration—silence. To be eloquently silent at the right time is a gift beyond the reach of art. It is at such times when "the heart has instinct of what in the heart of another is passing" that silence may be more eloquent than the happiest repartee of a brilliant conversationalist. They are heart-to-heart conversations.

The stars would never shine were there no night, and so the jewels of thought would never sparkle without an occasional lull in conversation as a background. It might be well for aspirants of conversational honors to remember that "silence is deep as eternity; speech is shallow as time."

Another thing that a successful conversationalist must eschew is sarcasm. The

spoken word comes not back, and if the word is tinged with sarcasm its recall is doubly lamented. Truth may travel in the garb of sarcasm but she is never a welcome guest. She may be bright and clever, but having sent her fiery darts quivering into the heart of another she instinctively repels. No, the sarcastic intercourse is not the perfect converse.

Wit, as a condiment of conversation, should be the sauce and not the meat. It is a happy essential, however, and if one is not so fortunately endowed the next best thing is to be able to quote another's wit in a pleasing manner.

Not infrequently a person is met who is brilliant in repartee, who, indeed, is so gifted that he does little else than let fly the sparks of wit. Such a conversationalist is extremely interesting for two or three evenings but, somehow, the power of appreciation wanes. And so it is that wit should be the secondary and not the primary desideratum.

However gifted the conversationalist may be as to sympathy, brain, subject-matter, wit, he is not a perfect conversationalist unless he has an agreeable voice. "Her voice was ever soft, gentle and low; an excellent thing in woman"—and Shakespeare might have aptly added, in man, too. There is something irresistible in such a voice, and it rings in the ears for days, even years.

At the Columbian Exposition I heard a woman's voice say, "You must sit down, father." It was a simple sentence, and yet spoken in a tone of such sweet sympathy, and tenderness, that instinctively I turned to note a young girl assist her father to a rustic settee in a wooded retreat. That was all, but I shall never forget the voice.

Conversational power is a potent one. It is perennial, outliving the charms of youth—the flash of the eye, the ruby lips and cheeks, the elastic step. It lasts nearly as long as life, and is ever attractive, ever pleasurable, ever instructive. An essential