

very great brilliancy. A man may talk with such surpassing power and splendor as to awe the rest of the company into silence; or excite their envy and so produce a chill where his aim would be to produce heat and sunshine. He should seek the art of making others feel quite at home with him, so that no matter how great may be his attainments or reputation, or how small may be theirs, they find it insensibly just as natural and pleasant talking to him as hearing him talk.

The talent for conversation, indeed more than anything else in life, requires tact and discretion. It requires one to have more varied knowledge, and to have it at instant and absolute disposal, so that he can just use as much or just as little as the occasion demands. It requires the ability to pass instantly and with ease from the playful to the serious, from books to men, from the mere phrase of courtesy to the expression of sentiment and passion.—*Prof. Hart.*

Speak Pleasantly.

The habit of speaking in pleasant tones to the sensitive hearts within our care, is of the utmost importance. If we would have them learn to speak gently and kindly to all, we must teach by precept and example, in their early years, while their minds are so elastic as to be led to pattern after the influences which surround them.

I was very busy one morning, and my little son of four years was amusing himself with his playthings. He was continually asking questions and requiring assistance. After a little time he left his play, sobbing as though his heart would break. I said, "Georgie, dear, what is the matter?" No reply. I repeated the question and he sobbingly replied, "You didn't speak pleasant to me." I said, "Don't cry; come and tell me about it."

A few pleasant words, the tears kissed away, and he was comforted and happy, and soon at play again, but I had learned a lesson never to be forgotten.—*Household.*

Not My Business.

A wealthy man in St. Louis was asked to aid in a series of temperance meetings, but he scornfully refused. After being further pressed, he said:

"Gentlemen, it is not my business."

A few days after, his wife and two daughters were coming home in the lightning express. In his grand carriage, with livered attendants, he rode to the depot, thinking of his splendid business, and planning for the morrow. Hark! did some one say, "Accident?" There are twenty-five railroads centering in St. Louis. If there has been an accident it is not likely it has happened on the ——— and Mississippi Railroad. Yet it troubles him. "It is his business" now. The horses are stopped on the instant, and upon inquiring he finds it has occurred twenty-five miles, on the ——— and Mississippi. He telegraphs to the superintendent,—

"I will give you five hundred dollars for an extra engine."

The answer flashes back, "No."

"I will give you one thousand dollars for an engine."

"A train with surgeons and nurses has already gone forward, and we have no other."

With white face and anxious brow the man paced the station to and fro. That is his business now. In half an hour, perhaps, which seemed to him half a century, the train arrived.

He hurried toward it, and in the tender found the mangled and lifeless remains of his wife and one of his daughters. In the car following lay his other daughter, with her dainty ribs crushed in, and her precious life oozing slowly away.

A quart of whiskey, which was drank fifty miles away, by a railroad employe, was the cause of the catastrophe.

"Who dares to say of this tremendous question, 'It is not my business?'"

GOOD TEMPER.—Perhaps there is no quality more desirable in man or woman than the homely one of good temper. It has a greater charm than beauty, more lasting fascination than wit, and a higher grace than the most brilliant accomplishments. It is the happiness of some people to be born with it, and their natural amiability shines out even in childhood, as contrasted with the captious, petulant, and fretful spirit of their little mates; but, like other excellent gifts, it may be cultivated.—*Mrs. Sangster.*

Untimely Words.

A frightened child is to be soothed, not scolded. Any rebuke which it deserves is not to be given while it is almost wild with terror. A despondent man needs, for the hour, words of cheer rather than merited reproof. A clergyman who valued highly his loving wife's criticisms upon his words and manner in the pulpit, asked her not to tell him what she had noticed out of the way, when he was fresh from his exhausting service; but to say all the encouraging words she could to begin with, saving her list of blunders until he had recovered sufficient nervous force to meet bravely their disheartening array. If a husband would find fault with his wife, or a wife with her husband, let it never, never be done before others. A rebuke under such circumstances is always untimely. To do it fittingly at any time requires wisdom, tact, and grace. If an author shows you a book of his, or an artist invites you to look at his latest painting, do not first point out the errors your quick eye observes there; but speak all the pleasant words you can of the work before you, and then, unless you have some very good reason for saying something else, unless there is some positive gain to be hoped for through your speaking—keep silence. "He that refraineth his lips"—at such a time—"is wise."

And if you find that you have had trouble, or have made it, through what you have spoken in hearty sincerity to others, do not console yourself with the thought that they are true words, kindly intentioned words; but consider well if they were fitting words, timely words—hence, prudent words. The speaking of untimely words may be a crying fault of yours—a fault to be recognized and battled, and by God's help corrected. The more you think it is not so, the greater is the probability that it is your besetting sin.—*Selected.*

Copying a Blot.

"Mother, whom of all the big boys should you like for me to pattern after?" asked a little boy who was looking around for a good example.

"Whom should you think?" asked his mother; "you know the big boys better than I do."

The little boy thought. Then he said, "There's Dan Parker, he snokes; there's Bill Parker, he swears; Tom Jones, he's got a horrid temper; Sam Jay, he sprees it; Jem Wood, he hates study; Joe Blake, he's cross; Charlie Doe, he goes fishing Sunday; Gus Tyng, he tells whoppers. Mother, there isn't one that, if I copy, I shouldn't copy a blot from."

Oh, how the ugly blots in our character stand out.

"Well," said his mother, "there is one perfect pattern."

"Who?" asked the boy eagerly. "I should love to know him."

"The Son of God," answered she, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth; and 'who left us an example, that we should follow his steps.'"

Oh, children, God knew you would need a perfect pattern to copy from. You could not copy God, because he is a Spirit; therefore he sent his Son to become a child in this world, to show you the pattern of a heavenly boy; and he wishes you to begin when a child to grow into his likeness. In his character there is no blot to copy. He is pure.—*Golden Threads.*

LEAVE-TAKING.—Not all have learned the fine art of cave-taking in an appropriate manner. When you are about to depart, do so at once, gracefully and politely, and with no dallying. Don't say, "It's about time I was going," and then settle back and talk on aimlessly for another ten minutes. Some people have just such a tiresome habit. They will even rise and stand about the room in various attitudes, keeping their hosts also standing, and then by an effort succeed in getting as far as the hall, when a new thought strikes them. They brighten up visibly and stand for some minutes longer, saying nothing of importance, but keeping every one in a restless, nervous state. After the door is opened the prolonged leave-taking begins, and every body in general and particular is invited to call. Very likely a last thought strikes the departing visitor, which his friend must risk a cold to hear to the end. What a relief when the door is finally closed! There is no need of being offensively abrupt, but when you are ready to go—go.