

accordingly. In order to become a proficient converser, one must know the necessary qualifications. In the first place, one must have a full mind, but he need not be necessarily learned. Many a man has dreamed his life out over his desk and has his mind so smothered with useless learning that he can no more use it for any practical purpose than David could walk, when sheathed in Saul's armor. The Dutchess of Gordon expressed her admiration of Burn's conversation by saying: "That it completely took her off her feet." Yet Burns, though well acquainted with books, was not a learned man. Some have luxuriant creativeness of mind, so that thought and images arise in it as naturally as flowers spring from the ground. There, of course, are the most brilliant and gifted talkers. Others, too, can afford an entertainment as gratifying, though not as stimulating, from the acquired treasures gained by extensive and well directed reading, or by long and sharp observation of men and manners. Another essential requisite for a good talker is a delicate tact in discovering the tastes and habits of thought in others, and the power of adapting his conversation to them. There is no man of an average understanding, who has not something to say on one or more subjects. Every man should be able to talk on many subjects. Let it not be imagined that we shall lose in force what we gain in variety, and that by striving to talk well on many subjects, we give up the power of talking superlatively well on any one. This is a faculty as rare as it is beautiful and it confers upon its possessor an almost unlimited power in social intercourse, for, he is by far the most agreeable man who can make others agreeable. To be a good talker, one must be a good listener. If one individual does all the talking, it ceases to be a conversation. There should be no monopolists. No one ought to do all the talking or all the listening.

There is an unbought grace, a natural charm in conversation, which wins our

confidence, and opens a way to our hearts. To be in the presence of a cultivated and accomplished man, who tasks his faculties to entertain us, seems like the enjoyment of the gifts of fairies. The tongue is a mighty instrument for good or evil, and, in saying this, I leave out of the question the power of an eloquent public orator, and speak of its effects merely in colloquial intercourse. The young and beautiful will cluster round an eloquent talker while Apollo himself, if he be silent, will be left to admire his own face in the glass. It was in conversation that Socrates uttered those discourses upon the nature of Beauty and Truth. Burke put forth all the treasures of his magnificent mind in conversation. It was said of him that you could not stop with him for five minutes without going away with the impression that he was a great man.

Jefferson says of Franklin, that no one could be in his presence, for however short a time, without learning something valuable. We are much too apt to neglect the means by which we are gifted for the purpose of communicating the results of our studies to other minds. In this wide world of action, no one man can know it all or the thousandth part, and, as each individual makes investigations in a particular direction, he should make a report of his research, and thus benefit mankind. Let us notice the comparative influence of writing and conversation. While the power of conversation is great, the pen is still greater in this, that the writer condenses several streams of thought into one deep channel, while the converser follows the leading current of his thoughts. I see no reason why an individual may not charm us with his tongue as well as his pen. Many intellectual men when in their closets are rulers of the world of mind and very common individuals when in society. Conversation is but the utterance of thoughts, and, to succeed in it, it is only necessary that we have manner, skill and confidence, which any man may acquire if he will link determination to