brotherhood. We desire to cultivate peace and charity with all our fellow-Christians throughout the world. We invite to ecclesiastical communion all who maintain our principles of faith, and order. And now we commend you to God, and the Word of His grace. We devoutly pray that the whole catholic Church may be afresh baptized with the Holy Ghost, and that she may speedily be stirred up to give the Lord no rest until He establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

ARTICLE III.

THE ART OF CONVERSATION.

At the outset, we ask pardon of this grave Quarterly, for thrusting upon its dignity a rambling paper, suited rather to the pages of a purely literary journal. Perhaps, in the end, we shall discover it sufficiently fruitful in its suggestions of profitable morality : at any rate, a theme which could engage a Cowper's muse, and point his gentle satire, may not be despised as beneath the condescension even of this right reverend Periodical.

It would be the superfluity of labour to argue here that man is a *social* being. Even the inferior animals are said not to thrive so well in a solitary pasture, as when browsing together in a common herd ; and so strong is the associating instinct, that it frequently overcomes the antipathy between hostile tribes, in cases of total exclusion from their own species. How much stronger must the social principle be in man, gifted with reason, and endowed with the divine faculty of speech, through which the domain of mind is not only enlarged, but held in common ! Men are not drawn

together in society, as Hobbes paradoxically affirms, by the pressure of self-interest and prudence, but by the force of an original instinct, to which the analogy of all nature seems distinctly to point. It is, indeed, a part of their constitution, which no tyranny, however severe, can destroy; no isolation, however protracted, can extinguish. The roader will remember the illustration given by Defoe, when, upon his solitary island, Robinson Crusoe made a confidential friend of his parrot; and the still stronger case of the prisoner in the Bastile, who attached himself to the spider in his cell; and grieved, as a mother grieves for the loss of a child, when it was wantonly killed, through the malice of the jailer. So burns the heart in every human breast, that its sympathies shoot forth like the tendrils of a vine, and cling to any thing most frail on earth, that it may escape the desolation of utter loneliness. Within the entire range of philosophical speculation, no mystery is more insoluble than the adjustment between these two poles of our nature, the *individual*, and the *social.* Each man is securely locked within the limits of his own personality, dwelling in the secret pavilion of his own consciousness, subject to no invasion from without, and girded with responsibilities that are absolutely irremissible; yet, at the same time, touching his fellow-man wherever he may turn, and commingling with the race as the drops unite in the waters of the sea. A microcosm, a world complete within himself; yet depending, for all improvement, upon social discipline, and for all happiness, upon social communion. He can not perfect his own nature in the privacy and seclusion of his own being. It is as natural for him to love, as to think or to breathe. If he lock up his affections within his own breast, he pays the forfeit of disobedience to the great social law of the universe, in a blighted soul mildewing beneath the lichen and moss which cover its ruins. His intellectual and moral faculties lie dormant, in the deep abyss of his own nature, until evoked by social intercourse;

just as sparks of fire lie concealed in the cold flint till struck out by contact with the steel. How beautifully is this philosophy embalmed in the flowing verse of Pope:

> " Heaven forming each on other to depend,
> A master, or a servant, or a friend,
> Bids each on other for assistance call,
> Till one man's weakness grows the strength of all ;
> Wants, frailties, passions, closer still ally
> The common interest, or endear the tie :
> To these we owe true friendship, love sincere,
> Each homefelt joy that life inherits here."

Thus, no man liveth to himself. Society, like the ocean, heaves beneath its mighty tides, and its separate waves, shouldering against each other, sparkle with a phosphorescent light which is extinguished in the stagnant calm.

Political economy teaches that material products derive their value from barter and exchange. The earth is divided into zones and climates, that there may be no perpetuated schism between the races of mankind. Diversity of wants induces that mutual interchange and supply, by which the families of man are drawn together in bonds of brotherhood. The staple, for example, which blooms upon our Southern fields, is but a useless weed until it is transported to the factor, who sells it to the foreign purchaser. The spinner converts it into thread, and the weaver into cloth. The merchant spreads the beautiful fabric upon his shelves; the tailor shapes it into the elegant costumes which we wear; and each prospers, in his turn, upon the new value which each imparts, as the product passes through his hand. So there is a commerce of the mind. The facts of nature lie distributed in magnificent profusion throughout the universe, which patient observation gathers up, and silent thinkers elaborate, until the accumulated treasures of science are poured forth upon the world, to form a portion of its mental wealth. Let it be remembered, however, that great thoughts lying in the mind,

like ore in the earth, do not constitute this wealth. They must be circulated as living truths, and possess an exchangeable value, before the world is enriched. The iron and the coal sleep for ever useless in their subterranean beds, till the miner sinks his shafts, draws them to the light of day, and converts them to the practical uses of life. So the sublime conceptions of poetry, the brilliant speculations of philosophy, the patient inductions of science, and all the images of beauty that fill an artist's dreams, must be rendered palpable in speech, or in the creations of the pencil and the chisel, which are the dies of the mint, impressing a marketable value upon each. They grow, in bulk and value, as they pass from mind to mind, waking up dormant thoughts in all; and, as exchangeable products, swell the volume of our common civilization and refinement. In this intellectual barter, conversation plays an humble, but most important, part: it is the coin, of larger or smaller denomination, necessary as the circulating medium. Books, indeed, are useful as the depositories of knowledge, like the secret vaults of a bank, in which the bullion is safely kept. But the bullion must be converted into coin for the purposes of exchange; and conversation, in all the degrees of the scale, from the large discourse of the Schools to the small talk of the saloon, forms the medium through which knowledge is distributed, from the pennyworth of the child to the princely portion of the sage. We do not insist, in this connexion, upon the higher offices of conversation, in cementing society together, through the affections. It is the vehicle of all those courtesies and amenities of life, and of those countless sympathies by which individuals, like separate threads, are woven into a common brotherhood. It answers all the ends of argument and illustration, to signalize its power as a great distributing agent, by which the treasures of individual thought are made to flow together, and form a community of wealth.

Of all the race, it most behooves woman to excel in this art of conversation, simply because she is the organ of society, delegated to the trust, both of creating and preserving it. Society is not formed by the aggregation of individuals, but by their fusion into each other. Its unity must not be overlooked, in considering the number and separateness of its constituent elements. Even the old Atomic philosophers could not build up their world-systems, until they supplied their floating particles with indentures and protuberances, by which to hook and grapple with each other, and gave to them the contrary notions by which they should be brought into contact. So there can be no society without those differences and contrarieties in character, which spring from the opposition of sex, like the two electricities, which attract by their very contradiction. Men, for example, may assemble for ever in their conventions and clubs, may deliberate in Senate Chambers, and frame systems of union without end; but their associations of sand will speedily be disintegrated, from the want of cohesion between the particles themselves. Society, in its true and large sense, is the offspring of love, and requires, for its origin and perpetuation, that generous reciprocation of the affections, which, as woman first inspires them, are assigned to her ministry, to be protected and nourished. This is the solemnity and glory of her position, that she is the organ of all society, the representative and guardian of its interests. It exists only in her presence, and is conserved through her purity. In our superficial thinking, we style her position humble, because she is not decked with the mere trappings of place, and because the subordinate honours of life are snatched from her hands. But, in this very humility of woman is found her glory. The Olympic games, indeed, are not for her; and she may not wrestle with the athlete, nor race with the charioteer. Her voice may not thunder amidst the jar and din of senatorial debate, nor whisper the secrets of

diplomatic intrigue. She may not shout at the head of armies, nor dictate in the councils of war. She builds up no thrones; but her power is beyond that of thrones and governments—the power of persuasion—simply universal in its scope, and irresistible in its tenderness. For this reason, because she is the genius of society, the very pivot upon which it turns, she is called to excel in that science upon which, above all others, the communion and joy of society depend. Whoever else may be indifferent to the power and utility of speech, she may not; and to wield effectively this mighty instrument of social intercourse, should command her highest ambition. It is the baton of her office, her queenly sceptre—let her wield it with a queenly grace.

For all this, woman is eminently fitted by her nature Her whole constitution, intellectual and moral—we may even add, physical, so far as a nervous irritability may be supposed to affect mental exercises—adapts her to reign supreme in this department. The quickness of her perceptions, the acuteness of her discriminations, the delicacy of her tastes, the liveliness of her fancy, the mental elasticity—tending with ease to all subjects of thought—the facility of her mental associations, and the genial sympathy of her heart, are advantages which seldom unite in any individual of the other sex. Add to these her exemption from the practical duties which devolve upon hard-working, laborious, busy man, and her obligation to excel in conversation might seem well nigh to be demonstrated. A late writer in one of the British Quarterlies accounts for the impossibility of grafting the French saloon upon the institutions of England, by this principle alone. "The Gallic race," writes he, "is preeminently an intellectual, idealistic race; the English is almost exclusively a political race, and throw themselves too vehemently into action ever to be talkers, *par excellence* ; whereas, the very perfection of *la causerie* is, to promote an elegant interchange of ideas, without any

object being too ardently pursued." Substitute in this paragraph *women*, for Frenchmen, who are even more intensely idealistic, and who are further removed from that driving practicalness which leaves men no breath to talk, and the honours of the saloon must be resigned to them, without a contest.

The importance of conversation to general society being, then, assumed, the path is fairly opened to consider what conversation, as an art, fully imports; what qualities of mind and heart are needed in its cultivation; and what obstructions must be surmounted to achieve consummate excellence. Undoubtedly, the talent of conversation is, with some, an original endowment. But this only means that a happy combination of faculties exists, which renders conversation spontaneous and easy. There is a power of concentration which enables one to give his whole attention to a speaker ; a readiness of apprehension, which grasps his meaning through the most imperfect half-utterance, and a rapid movement of the mind, which frames a reply as soon as the pause demands it. Through a happy faculty of generalization, one's knowledge may be so beautifully classified, and the logical habit may so place it at command, that the particular needs only to be worked from the general, and all that is required to sustain the current of thought, is supplied upon the first suggestion. Under these conditions, conversation flows quietly in its natural channel, without fatigue, simply because without the least consciousness of effort. But this is simply to say that the talent of conversation, however it may appear to be a native gift, may be cultivated indefinitely, by the discipline of those powers upon which it so obviously depends. Conversation, then, in the common acceptation of reciprocal discourse, is determined upon principles capable of a clear exposition, and which require attention and skill in their management and application.

The features which, especially characterize it are *reciprocation*, and *continuity*, or *progress.* It is not a monologue, under the projectile force of a single mind. The force which it obeys is a resultant force, from the impact of combined intellects, each moving from its own side, and giving a separate direction; so that its own course is determined by the compounded influence of all. There must be reciprocity of thought and speech, or there is no commerce of the mind, enriching by exchange. Mere volubility of tongue is but a brawling torrent through some mountain gorge, whose impetuous waters are swallowed up in the sands, or are lost in the stagnant marsh; waters which bear no burden upon their bosom, nor disembogue to swell the volume of the sea. Our words must make echoes in the minds around us, which, like answering caves, must give back the Round, until the swelling reverberation shall rise above the hills, and fill the dome of heaven. Hence the exquisite tact needed to take the gauge of those with whom we are suddenly thrown in contact. The arc of the circle in which their thoughts swing, must be rapidly and accurately measured, and the points must be ascertained upon which a mutual sympathy may be enkindled. This partly explains the proverbial awkwardness which marks the first attempts at conversation, and which is hit off with rare humour by the poet:

> "The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
> Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
> Yes, Ma'am, and No, Ma'am, uttered softly, show,
> Every five minutes, how the minutes go;
> Each individual suffering a constraint
> Poetry may, but colours can not, paint;
> As if in close committee on the sky,
> Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry;
> And finds a changing clime a happy source
> Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
> We next inquire, but softly, and by stealth,
> Like conservators of the public health,
> Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
> And coughs, and rheums, and phthisic and catarrh."

We smile at the picture, in which, perhaps, we ourselves have mournfully figured; but may do well to consider how it illustrates the nature of conversation. The embarrassment is not always due to timid modesty, nor yet to the vanity which can not be sufficiently forgetful of self. It is simply a species of social strategy, manœuvring for a position—the excruciating tuning-notes of the fiddle-bow, a prelude to the harmony. But when, after this preliminary skirmishing, a topic of common interest shall be sprung, it must be managed to mutual advantage. Each must regard the interests of his partners, not speaking all he may wish, nor having the reciprocity all on one side; but just so much as shall elicit a corresponding product from them; so that, upon dissolving the firm, the profits may be distributed in fair proportion, as the property of each.

In like manner, genuine conversation must be marked by a gradual progress of thought, verging, in steady continuity, towards an assigned goal. It proposes to itself an end, though, of course, not so determinate as in elaborate discourse. It is not rational conversation, but sheer twaddle, if destitute of this *terminus ad quam.* Whatever be the topic, the interlocutors close it up between them, as they press it forward to an appropriate conclusion. The mind must not be suffered, like a truant hound upon a false scent, to fly off upon those way-side associations of thought which are perpetually breaking from cover; but the subject, once unearthed, must be tracked through all its windings, till the spoil is yielded to the sportman's hand. Nothing can be more fatal to this progress of thought, than the indolence which permits it to drift away, swept hither and yon by every casual suggestion, like a straw in the eddy of a stream. The reader will remember the artistic skill with which Shakspeare represents these shallow and impertinent associations crowding upon a vulgar mind, in the scene where Dame Quickly recalls to the fickle memory of Falstaff his broken promise of marriage. In a single

sentence, she crowds together the Dolphin chamber and tho parcel-gilt goblet by which the false knight swore, the round table and the sea-coal fire, the irruption of the butcher's wife to borrow a mess of vinegar for a dish of prawns: all these, with other details, shoal together in her speech—showing how an untrained mind, at the mercy of chance associations,, sweeps round within a circle, and comes out nowhere. It is important, therefore, to ascertain the principles of intercommunion between different minds, the regulation of which calls for the advice of the *moralist,* no less than the rules of the *dialectician.*

The first and most essential requisite, undoubtedly, is *knowledge:* supplying the raw material, which, as the shuttle moves in the conversational loom, shall be woven into fabrics, substantial or light, as taste or the occasion may determine. " Out of nothing, nothing comes," in an adage never more profusely illustrated than when discourse is spun from empty ignorance. There may be endless talk—a bleak, barren waste of gossip—but no conversation, in the sense we have endeavoured to define. The spectacle would be grotesque, if it were not humiliating, of ignorance striving to keep up the forms of social intercourse, without resources from which contributions to the common stock may be drawn. Alas ! it is often attended with consequences both melancholy and bitter. The tale of brick must be rendered, but there is no straw with which to make it. As there must be speech, gossip and scandal usurp the place of reason and thought; and, from minds not essentially malignant, a thousand waspish slanders swarm forth, and sting wherever they alight. In rural districts, where society is comparatively homogeneous, and social intercourse is not reduced to system, this evil may not sorely press. But in cities and towns, where hundreds are thrown together, an unsorted mixture—where wealth and other accidents force vulgar minds from their own parallel, to range across the breadth of a zone—

the effort to keep up oven the forms of social life is some times desolating in the extreme. The homespun conversation about things understood and known, must be abandoned; and the tattling of sheer ignorance, that feels itself compelled to talk, perhaps, without a particle of malice, throws a whole community into a state of anarchy and civil war. One can scarcely refrain from wishing that these brewers of mischief might be visited with the punishment inflicted upon the dame of Narbonne, who, according to Knickerbocker, was " doomed, for her excessive volubility, to pool five hundred thousand and thirty-nine ropes of onions, and actually ran out at her eyes before half the hideous task was accomplished." The remedy for this is knowledge, affording a solid basis for all the negotiation and exchange of social intercourse. This knowledge must be comprehensive and various, embracing all that the most minute observation can collect, and the most copious reading can supply. The power of adapting ourselves to those with whom we are casually thrown in contact, depends largely upon this variety of information, which takes up the habits and pursuits of all. This, together with the requisite discrimination and tact, will put us *en rapport* with all whom we chance to meet. It is not given to any arbitrarily to choose the theme of conversation, which must often take its rise from casual suggestions, and be drifted into its channel by the circumstances of time and place, or by the characters and tastes of those with whom we associate. We must, therefore, often be at fault, if copious reading and mature reflection have not enlarged the area of our own thoughts. Nothing may be safely neglected. History, with her voluminous records; science, with all her mysteries; philosophy, with all its subtleties; belle-lettres, yielding up its flowers from a thousand beds; the whole encyclopedia of knowledge must be compassed; and from that reading, which Lord Bacon says makes a full man, conversation must flow as water

from a reservoir, simply by the pressure of its own abundance.

Let not despair lift up its hands at the, gigantic task which is here imposed. We are only sketching an ideal. He who hopes to be a master of this great art must, indeed, be a Leviathan of knowledge; for, to talk discreetly with every man, upon every thing, infers that nothing is unknown. But, as there is an endless gradation in knowledge, there is a corresponding various mastery of the art we are discussing. We simply affirm the proportion between the two. Very large measures of information may be gained by every man who has opportunity and industry, and the degrees of this shall indicate, as on a scale, his ability to converse. The secret of large mental acquisitions is, *generalization.* The memory, however expanded, is incapable of sustaining an infinity of details; and if it were, it would be a confused lumber-room of unrelated facts. But science, in all her branches, has sifted and arranged these, generalizing the principles in which they are implicitly contained, and which are easily borne about with us. A wagon-load of copper pennies would yield but a modicum of wealth; yet, if summed up in bank notes, and bills of exchange, a man might transport millions in his pocket-book. The art of learning consists not only in collecting the particulars of knowledge, but in condensing these into final principles. The law of association will surprisingly assist in unpacking these bales of knowledge, and in bringing out, again, the particular from the general, an the secret spring in the wainscoting of ancient houses often threw open concealed chambers of untold riches. This habit of classifying facts, not only explains the mystery of great learning, but is intrinsically valuable, as being a sort of mental digestion, by which knowledge is assimilated, and becomes a part of the mind itself. This, too, is indispensable in conversation, which requires knowledge always at command. There is not time to draw it forth

from pigeon-holes, nicely labelled, and tied up with red tape. It must be incorporated with the substance of the mind, and scintillate, from the mind's own action, as the electric spark is given out from a charged battery. Whoever hopes, without knowledge industriously collected and systematized, to shine as a conversational star, indulges a dream, vain as any which can visit him in sloop.

We will, then, suppose one to possess all the intellectual furniture which has been described; to be familiar with the schools of philosophy, and the opinions which divide them; to be at home in all the departments of science, able to enunciate the laws by which the material universe is regulated; to have unravelled the thread of history, disentangling the complicated skein of political intrigue and diplomacy; to know the great productions of art in every age and clime; to have ranged over the whole field of polite literature, as found in the classics of his own and of other tongues; all this variety of knowledge shall, by sufficient reflection, have become so entirely his own, that he needs only to touch the spring of association any where, and it flows forth with the spontaneous and regulated fullness of an artesian jet. There remains another requisite of high conversational talent, the *facility* and *felicity of expression*, which shall convoy his thoughts with precision and elegance The *style* of conversation, no less than its *matter*, should be proposed for sedulous cultivation. The gift of the fairy should be invoked, so that pearls may drop from the lips whenever they are opened. Every species of slang, which gains currency from the broad and coarse humour in which it originates, must be excluded. We do not pause to enforce this canon, simply because the delicacy of taste imparted by intellectual culture will, by its own smelting processes, purge away these impurities, together with those rude provincialisms which mar the catholic and pure dialect of the republic of letters. But that sustained elegance of diction which forms the proper vesture of noble thoughts

can not be acquired without attention. It is the plumage of the royal bird which sustains his flight upward to the sun; and our callow thoughts must be fledged in language suited to the wing upon which they hope to soar. At the same time, this elevated diction must be free from the suspicion of elaboration. Any thing which interferes with the ease and *abandon* of conversation, begets a sense of fatigue and constraint, under which it speedily languishes. The thought must, therefore, go bounding along, never halting for expression, never pausing to put on a Court dress. In order to this, language must not only *seem*, but must actually *be*, *impromptu* ; which can only be when it is the habitual style of our thinking. However severe the early efforts in its acquisition, these must have terminated in the case and naturalness of established habit—so that to think, and to think in elegant language, shall be identical. The thought must weave around itself its appropriate style, and no clicking of the shears must suggest the tailoring by which its costume has been fashioned. No small discipline is required to move forward, in the freedom and hurry of animated conversation, upon this highest summit level of style, without descending into platitudes or tripping into negligence. Yet the difficulty is much abated by the fact that the same copious reading which supplies the material of conversation, supplies also the copious language to be employed. The mind familiar with the affluent diction of the best writers, insensibly catches their tone. Its own vocabulary is enlarged ; and ten thousand images, which embellished their pages, start forth from it, warm with life and beauty. Our manners and our style we take up, as plants their color, by absorption from the light that shines around us; and may thus easily betray the company we keep among the great, immortals who survive in books.

We are prepared now to consider the art of conversation on its *moral* side, as heretofore we have exhibited its *intellectual*. Here we signalize, as first in importance, a *genial*

sympathy with the society in which we move. Living words can flow only from the heart, the fountain of life. The intellect shines with a light cold as the moon-beam, and can never supply the generous warmth which shall cover society with its grateful verdure. The sensibilities of the heart must supply that sympathy with the active world around us, necessary to all true intercourse. The mere book-worm loses his ability to converse from this cause. For though, as Milton says, " books are not absolutely dead things," yet they are not the warm and living persons upon which our personal affections may be concentrated. The solitary student, therefore, dries away, almost to a mummy, in his constant association with the dead past: and his lack of genial sympathy, like the moat around a feudal castle, cuts him off from the living, breathing world around him. He moves in the midst of it like some spectre of the grave-yard, whose form beats with no pulse of a common life, and whose lips are scaled in eternal silence. An active sympathy can never be counterfeited, nor can it be conjured up by an effort of the will. It must well up spontaneously from the deep within, as the springs of affection mysteriously flow, and force it upward to the lips. It will astonish those who have never made it a subject of thought, how this sympathy flashes from the eye, or trembles in the tone—how, by an electric affinity, congenial spirits are drawn together; while the absence of it creates a vacuum through which the electric current is unable to pawn. It is felt and recognized by the young child about its mother's knee, who is instinctively attracted to repose its little confidences in that mother's ear; or else repelled, to bury its disappointed love in a mournfulness—one of childhood's shadows—none the less painful because its origin is unexplored. That mother, too, needs this reciprocating sympathy to discharge the full office of a mother's training. She must let herself completely down into that infant spirit, with a freshness scarcely less than when young thoughts

and hopes first budded in her own infant breast. Thus only can she converse with her child, and, through oral discourse, commence that education which opens with the cradle, and closes only in the grave. Many unfriendly influences threaten to check this, outflow of social sympathy, which must be energetically resisted. The preoccupation of mind with business, so necessary to professional success, often shuts us up in a selfish seclusion. Affliction and sorrow some times throw their early blight upon the affections, inducing a morbid depression, fatal to all elasticity of spirit. In this may be perceived the value of practical religion, which the Scriptures declare to "have the promise of the life that now is;" in that it sanctifies every relation, and chastens the heart, so that it may not wrap itself in a mantle, and indulge the mere egotism of grief. In all this world of discipline, there is no spectacle more pleasing than a heart which preserves its freshness in the midst of adversity, and in a succulent old ago exhibits the enthusiasm which in youth gave out its light and heat at every social contact.

Another moral element entering into conversation is, *habitual self-control.* We use this term in its broadest sense, as meaning more than simple command of temper—but rather the complete mastery of self, in all the forms of its manifestation. The ebullition of spleen under opposition is utterly inconsistent with that refinement of feeling which respects the rights of others as equal to our own; and can scarcely escape from those who have long been under the restraints of social discipline. But there are other obstructions to free intercourse, all having their root in a self-love which needs to be controlled, if it can not be eradicated. There in, for example, your *dogmatist,* who hurls his oracular decisions at your head, and brains you outright with his positiveness. What interchange of thought can there be with one who sits cross-legged, like a Turkish bashaw, and strangles conversation in its birth ? There is, again,

your *shallow skeptic,* whose minute criticism will pick to shreds the entire system of human beliefs; and whose eye can see nothing in all the glories of the sun, save the spots to censure upon his disc. His overweening vanity would plunge the world in universal doubt, that in the wild chaos of opinions he may be safe from tho risk of being ever detected in error. Where nothing is established as true, nothing can be proved as false. Plainly, there can be no conversation with one who constructs nothing by affirmation, but destroys every thing by universal negation. Then follows your *disputatious sophist,* whose only style of conversation is

"The duel in the form of a debate;"

where nothing is heard but

"The clash of argument and jar of words,

Worse than the mortal brunt of rival swords."

Surely, we may recoil from these prize-fighters of the social ring, and scorn the Trojan combat, in which

"Daros may beat Entellus black and blue."

After these, you will find the *self-sufficient egotist,* who, pleased with the endless clatter of his own tongue, usurps the rights of others, and pours forth his stream of speech like water through the broken sluices of a mill-dam. Last of all, this succession of social pests concludes with the *satirical wit,* whose speech, like the Indian's arrow, is always pointed with poison. His wit must circulate, though every stroke of the keen blade cut through some heart; and no feelings are too sacred to restrain the biting jest or scorching repartee. His selfish vanity finds its reward in the laughter resounding to his satire, though it be at the price of bleeding hearts and ruined friendships. These obstructions to social intercourse have their root alike in that inordinate self-love, which leads the moralist to press this canon of conversation : it must be conducted

with a rigid self-control, locking up our vanity from every unseemly exhibition.

Lest we become tedious, we add *true moral courage* as the last pre-requisite to conversation. This preserves intact our individuality, which is placed continually beneath an immense social pressure. The honest convictions, which have been matured through long reflection, are not to be surrendered through a weak complaisance; nor must a single shred of truth be sacrificed to the devouring Moloch of public opinion. Especially is this quality necessary to woman, if she would reign as queen of the social state. We have often boiled with righteous indignation, upon seeing a high-spirited and gifted woman compelled to lower her crest, and succumb beneath the rude charge of pedantry. Her kindling spirit droops ; the fire fades from her sparkling eye; and her graceful colloquial powers suddenly collapse, that she may escape the brutal and cowardly stigma of a *bas bleu.* The sensitiveness which shrinks from the offensive epithet, is honorable to her. It is the true womanly instinct which recognizes her power and her glory, as lying in her subordination; and teaches that to flaunt forth, in an assumed superiority, is to abdicate her influence. The violet is her chosen symbol, hiding its modest head beneath its tuft of leaves, yet not restraining its perfume from scenting the air, and so she waits for some friendly hand to pluck her from concealment. It requires no little nerve, combined with exquisite tact, to force down the vile aspersion, and hold her place against ruffian and brow-beating ignorance. Let her, however, remember that the same interval which separates the scholar from the pedant, also divides the woman of genuine culture from the *bas bleu.* The scholar needs not to sow his speech with ostentatious patches of learning, with which the pedant bespangles his, like the dress of a circus clown : so the absence of affectation and cant will always vindicate a woman of generous cultivation from the

offensive charge she so much dreads. Let her remember, too, this vulgar taunt never drops from the lips of her intellectual equals; but the painful echo falls upon her ear from that outer circle of the cowardly and ignorant, who can find no darkness for their concealment, save in the extinguishment of her light. If she be called to sacrifice the one or the other, let her choose wisely between the good opinion of fools, which must be gained through unworthy concessions, and the admiration of wise men, who will touch her hand with reverence, only to conduct her to the throne on which she has the right to sit.

We will gather up these scattered thoughts, and knot them in a single conclusion. It may be well submitted to the educated minds of our country, how far it devolves upon them to elevate the tone of our social intercourse. There is, undoubtedly, a large amount of genial society, where our people meet informally, and without pre-concert. But in our large assemblies, which are meant to give more full expression of the social principle, how languid and dreary the intercourse! These entertainments, unlike the graceful *soirées* of the French, or even the extemporaneous re-unions of the educated English, degenerate, for the most part, into so many measured yards of brocade and silk duly crushed in a regular jam—into so many jewels, glittering upon so many heaving bosoms—a vulgar display of fashion and parade, inviting the sharp irony of Goldsmith's Chinese Philosopher, in his " Citizen of the World." Who has not yawned, again and again, beneath the insipidities of what, with a kind of broad burlesque, is called "the best society?" How much, too, of that levity, against which the Church in vain thunders her anathemas, is clue to the fact that the crowd lacks amusement, and does not know how to talk ? The problem is, how a dozen score of stupid people can amuse each other through five or six hours : a sufficiently hard requisition, if all of them were wise ; but with those whose brains have all slipped down to

heel, what resource is there but to fill the weary hours with the unmeaning dance—and THIS IS SOCIETY ! We do not speak here as churchmen, but as members of that great family, in which all are bound together; we utter a protest against abuses which destroy even the conception of society. To us, the term suggests a rational interchange of thought, "the feast of reason and the flow of soul;" and the prevailing frivolity of our social assemblies shuts out the communion of intellect—a confession by judgment of mental bankruptcy and poverty. But the evil can not be cured, until rational and pleasing conversation shall be the charm of every circle, and hence the responsibility resting upon us to lift the intellectual tone of society to the desired level.

ARTICLE IV.

TIMOTHY'S OFFICE.

There are few characters in the New Testament that dwell in the heart of the Church with a more affectionate interest than Timothy. His early piety, upon which the aged Apostle seemed to dwell with such deep delight in the last days of his life ; his hereditary blessing, that descended in covenant transmission from his grand-mother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice; his filial relation to Paul, who can hardly speak of him without a gush of fatherly tenderness, and his own gentle and beautiful spirit, make him the Melancthon of apostolic men, and shrine him in the most loving remembrance of the whole Church. The very scantiness of the materials left to us about his personal history, combined with the occasional glimpses of it

Benjamin M. Palmer, "The Art of Conversation" SPR 14.4 (Jan. 1862): 550-569.