

### As To Conversation

AND now the eastern papers are telling us, some of them, that the art of conversation is going out of date. Some are trying to tell how it can be cultivated.

It seems to us that conversation is mostly a habit and the habit is directed by the occupation of the people. The conversation of a lot of stock brokers is about stocks, the conversation of ladies just before easter is very liable to be about Easter hats. The best school for conversation is that which comes naturally in an intellectual home, when the nights are long in the winter and books are plenty and the whole family, from the smallest child that can talk up, is on some high or holy theme.

Burnes Cotter's Saturday Night described a good place in which to cultivate conversation, and really the rule ought to be that the heart and the brain both should be interested and only the best thoughts be given, and by the best we mean those that interest the brain and the heart most at the same time.

The older children in a family grow thinking their father probably is the best conversationalist in the world; the younger grow up believing their mother is, the fact being that the father has become absorbed in business and the mother has become more and more absorbed in her children.

You go into a counting house in New York, you meet distinguished men, men whose names are authority on the street and the average western man, when brought in direct association with that class of men, are astonished to find how narrow they are and how provincial; their "repertoire" extends only over two or three subjects and their knowledge of the outside of their own country is shamefully limited.

When the man from Wyoming took the first train that went through to the east and went to Concord and called on the great Emerson and said: "Mr. Emerson, I have no business, I merely called to pay my respects to you because I have admired you and your writings so long," and Emerson asked him where he was from and he told him from Wyoming. Emerson showed that even the limitations were attaching to him, because he said: "Wyoming? I believe that is a place in Pennsylvania."

He had never heard of the real Wyoming of the west with the cowboy, the fighters, the riders and the range. Conversation will advance or recede just as the business of the people advance or recedes.

Speaking of New York, another thing will strike the western man sooner than anything else, and that is that while the New Yorker that he talks to can tell him about half the counties in England and name the celebrated places in France, he will be liable to look perfectly dazed when a man speaks of "where rolls the Oregon," or Yosemite or Yellowstone paint their everlasting glorious pictures for human eyes to admire.

That is where the provincial part of eastern men comes in. He took up the impression while a child that it would be a great thing to go to Europe and he has been over two or three times; he has passed through some places where people said there was magnificent scenery; he has seen some of the fine works of art, and it has had the effect to close his mind to anything west of New York, or at least, west of Niagara Falls.

There will be better talkers when men are better posted and when their thoughts are drawn into higher currents and they realize that there is, after all, something for men to do except to make a scuffle of from ten to forty years to get a little bigger fortune than the next neighbor. In other words, we are just as we are raised. When the Greeks were all good talkers, was a time when the young men would listen to philosophy of Socrates or of Aristotle; they be-

lieved in certain fixed principles and they believed in the immortal gods and their influence upon men. You take men nowadays that have no fixed principles and do not believe in any God, and they are generally shallow talkers.

### Modjeska and Booth

THE papers are still bringing in their tributes to Modjeska. They tell of her charm and try to express what they feel, and they invariably fall down.

The truth about Modjeska was that she was a great woman. If she had been a man she would have been a statesman, but the charm of her as a woman was that while she looked and acted the high born, while every motion was as distinctly high born as that of a blooded horse, she was the most affable, considerate, gentle creature in the world.

In one paper before us is her picture in Ophelia and below is the legend, "When she played this role with Edwin Booth, the Hamlet had to act his best to save himself from eclipse." And that is all foolishness; moreover, it is unfair. The part of Ophelia does not permit any great or rather striking ability on the part of the actress; that is, the actress cannot reveal any great ability, while Hamlet happens to be the real prince and the real soul of the play; and to us, that Edwin Booth had to do his best to keep from being eclipsed, is folly. It was a fashion with Edwin Booth to do his best on all occasions. If the audience was worth it, he played his best out of respect to the audience; if the audience was an inferior one, he played his best out of self-respect and in honor of his profession.

Modjeska was great in her own way and the especial charm that saved her despite her imperfect use of English, was that she was a much greater woman than she was actress. We do not believe anyone in America ever appreciated her, because she could not give herself full expression; but in her native tongue on her native heath, with youth and beauty and grace and a magnetism which made her glorious, all to help, we can understand that her countrymen and countrywomen went crazy over her presentations.

But even then, Edwin Booth ought not to be discounted by comparison, because Edwin Booth, according to all his brother artists and all the most celebrated critics, was the nearest absolutely perfect impersonation of what Shakespeare meant by Hamlet that was ever seen.

### Effects of Topography

A BOOF has been written in the east, telling of the thousand years of war, which, with brief intervals of rest, has raged over eastern Europe and western Asia. But Governor Gilpin, of Colorado, fifty years ago, told the story better, at least gave clearer reasons for it. He pictured the eastern continent with its great pyramid of mountains in the center, with rivers running down these mountains in all directions, and spreading out like a fan; the tribes settled in the valleys of these rivers, and being isolated, having no mutual sympathies or affection, and hence ready, when advantage seemed possible, to engage in war.

It is thus we see them, and can mark that they are as distinct from each other in language, in physical appearance, in thought and purpose as they were when the Messiah was crucified. So distinct have been these dividing lines that with them there has practically been no change since that cross was replanted. They are just as little civilized, just as cruel, just as unscrupulous in their ways, as they were of old—there seems to be no progress in them, and the reason seems to be, that they have mingled with no other peoples save in war, and there has been nothing to soften their lives, nothing to change their habits or their lines of thought.

But at the same time, in the same address, Gilpin pointed out that the great center of our country was the mighty valley that stretches from the Alleghanies to the Rocky Mountains, from the Lakes to the Gulf, showed how the waters converged to one great central river; that as the waters tended to one center, so would the people; that from the first they would mingle together in business, which would be followed by friendships, mutual confidence and respect, and in pride of native land; that the men of that valley would eventually control the policy of the government, and in the near future, become the great controlling power of the world.

Surely so far his prophecy seems in the direct course of fulfillment.

Let any one who never thought of the effect of topography on a people imagine that instead of the Ohio River a second Himalayan range of mountains rose across the country from the Alleghanies to the Rockies. Does any one think that in that event the war of 1861-65 would have been the same? Does any one think there would have ever been reconciliation between the two sections? Would not the race have been a hostile one, and perpetual wars for a longer period than the more than three thousand years since Cyrus and old Cambyses laid waste western Asia and northern Africa?

The men in the Lake and Gulf States are steadily drawing nearer together. Except for the race question, they would be in full accord now, and when they do become that way, they will direct the policies of all our country.

Their mutual interdependence will do the work. By that time probably 200,000,000 of people will be under the flag and their dominating force will compel the right to be the rule all around this old world, and the majesty and splendor of the flag with all its stars will make a new firmament to which the nations will turn as did the old Cholduns to the sun.

The ill-timed and senseless clamor that has again been started over the opening of the red light stockade on the west side is serving the purpose of rehashing to a tired public the details of a situation which, if left alone, would very quickly adapt itself to prevalent conditions.

The yelp of the "Mouth" is, of course, nothing but campaign stuff, and the sheriff has been instructed to discipline Job Lyon by piling up red light arrests on him, for his action in suing the county commissioners for their Christmas gift of five thousand odd dollars to the Smoot organ. While the establishment of the stockade cannot be defended for a moment from a strictly moral standpoint, yet the fact remains that a thoroughly disgraceful and disgusting condition in effect for years on Commercial street, in the heart of the business district of the city, has been done away with and the Citizens Investment company, in building the new district has furnished clean, sanitary houses and streets and special police service, to say nothing of having screened the entrance to the stockade from the street so effectually that the ordinary passer-by would not recognize the district. As long as it was deemed necessary to establish the place somewhere in the city, or contend with places being established in the residence districts it is doubtful if a better place than that selected on the west side could be found. As soon as the sheriff and the "Mouth" wind up their grand stand play conditions will undoubtedly adjust themselves satisfactorily to all immediately concerned.

While the council delays passing the ordinance requiring all meat butchered here and going into local meat markets to bear the government stamp, we wonder who is eating the diseased, tainted and dirty products of the abattoirs found by the investigating committee last week?