

capacity whereby all our social relationships the most complex and the most simple may be put in towards. Through the modulation of voice and the apt use of words which have drawn their varied shades of thought, not from learning and learned, but from the homely experience of the thoughtful though illiterate masses, we have the means of probing the inmost recesses of fellow hearts and impressing them in turn with our sentiments. I say we have the means, but, how constantly is this God-given play-ground and drill-ground of our social being—conversation—turned into a rubbish heap, a garbage heap, a cess pool of iniquitous gossip. Such as breeds poison and scatters it in every direction like the typhoid marshes from whose exhalations cities are depopulated! Could we phonograph the conversation of one of our mixed social gatherings and reproduce it during some leisure hour, we would be horror stricken at the utter silliness, not to say, hurtfulness that prevails where all should be high toned, refining and pure. The sorry jest and questionable anecdote which have drawn the laugh in saloons, gambling joints and places of ill fame too often make the stock in trade, disguised as it may be, but only enough to leave their low born origin too plainly recorded. The shaft of envy, the malice of social rivalry, the hypocrisy of selfish design, the stiletto thrust of slander would come out like punctuation marks profusely scattered amidst a mass of wordy nonsense nauseating from the very absence of savor. If conversation, is, as I have defined it, the outcome of social life, the student of speech must needs be impressed with a certain rottenness in social life, which harmonizes poorly with the boasted moral elevation of man. To carry the figure further, may we not say that men and women are phonographs of the society they keep, and is not this fact the very key to the trouble? We do not in our social reunions reflect the home and the house in which with brothers and sisters we were trained, but, the flashy, gaudy, and too often vicious companionship into which we have strayed away. Society has to a certain extent destroyed the