

The President Speaking

Not in a religious journal but in the October number of the Santa Fe magazine I find my message this week. Here it is, "Conversation is probably the foremost delight of civilized life. Good talk, flowing freely, sprinkled with wit and humor, anecdote and epigram, is rare food for the mind and spirit.

"It brightens the days and nights, stimulates the heart action, nourishes the nerves and refreshes the whole man.

"It is unfortunate that the art does not flourish. Bridge, although a good game, is a poor substitute for talk. Cards are usually a confession of weakness, of our inability to get through an evening if dependent solely on our wits for entertainment.

"Clive Bell in his book, "Civilization," says, 'Of the good things of life the best is conversation—real conversation—the exchange of sentiments and ideas between people completely disarmed and at their ease, people without fear or suspicion, having no axes to grind, seeking neither to impose nor display themselves, seeking truth by way of pleasure.'

"Why is it that young men who, at college, can talk all night are unable, ten years after they leave college, to indulge in a five-minute verbal combat without bringing the conversation around to inane observations on golf, the stock market, baseball and bootleggers?"

How soon are our topics of intelligent and interesting conversation exhausted? Are we either bored, or embarrassingly lacking in ideas as soon as conversation begins to pass beyond football, baseball, "dates," and games?

One of the great services of a college education is to open the windows of the mind upon a thousand scenes of attractive interests so that all life including our conversation shall be wondrously enriched.

W. P. Behan.
