

AGAIN?

To my Home on Lake Champlain

BY JEANNETTE MARKS

Shall I come again?
Again to see the reeds,
Yellowing now?

*“Bye and bye!
Bye and bye!”
Lake rushes cry.*

Shall I come again
To these willow leaves
Falling now?

*Their joy was brief!
The willow leaf
Knows grief.*

Shall I breathe again
Gray balsam dripping amber
On the mould?

*What knows the year
Of any fear,—
Of any amber tear!*

TALK AND TALKERS

BY J. B. YEATS

I ONCE asked a great scholar of a famous University his idea of happiness. He answered: "A good read." But scholars are like the stars, lonely and inscrutable, and in God's holy keeping. I myself like best those rare moments when congenial people meet and there is good conversation, each man doing his best to say exactly what he thinks. Is there anything so delightful, and at times so beautiful, and at all times so beguiling, as good conversation? Talk is man's sowing-time, and as he sows, so shall he reap. Literature is the harvest of talk. If Elizabethan literature is the best in the world, it is because conversation at the Court of Elizabeth and in the London cafés was the best in the world. Elizabethan literature is nobly extravagant and musical, scarcely touched at all with the spirit of contention; and so, no doubt, was their talk. If Ben Jonson, who was a Scotchman, had had his way, no doubt, the conversation would have been as contentious as the speeches of lawyers or the sermons of theologians or the talk of a man out of Belfast. You can't read Shakespeare without feeling that he was shy of contention, disliking to contradict or be contradicted. Images to him were dear for their own sake, as one loves little children or pretty girls, without vexing ourselves as to whether they are good little children or good girls.

Conversation has as many enemies as Mother Church, and chief of these is card playing. I have been told that in Pittsburgh the ladies entertain distinguished 'strangers by inviting them to luncheon parties where there are no men. The husbands can get themselves up in immaculate evening clothes, but only to play cards, except when they talk business among themselves. Had the Athenians acquired the habit, it is very doubtful whether we should have had an Aeschylus or a Sophocles or an Aristotle. Another enemy is story-telling.