



A SPEECH should be *short* and to the *point*. Remember that brevity is the soul of—a speech. A long speech, unless the speaker be exceptionally eloquent, or the occasion exceptionally mandatory, is one of the greatest of possible inflictions. Some men love to hear themselves talk, and, quite oblivious of the feelings of their listeners, continue to drone out labored sentences and weary platitudes until politely coughed or buzzed down. These men ought to be indicted as nuisances.

The specimen speeches which we present in this Cyclopædia, are merely meant to act as guides. They show the form of speech most popular, and give the length that is likely to be received with approval. Of course there are occasions when a long speech is absolutely necessary. The toasts and sentiments embrace all subjects, and are suited to occasions of a festive character.

A PUBLIC OFFICER, ON RETIRING, IS PRESENTED WITH A SOUVENIR.

SIR—Your friends—and their name is legion—cannot permit you to retire into private life without a direct expression of their esteem and regard. I am desired on their part to present you with the accompanying as a very slight token indeed of their appreciation of so admirable an officer, so good a citizen, and so perfect a gentleman.

REPLY.

SIR—To have won your approval, and that of the friends you so kindly represent, is indeed sweeter to me than anything else that life, with all its prizes, could offer. I am bold enough to say that I have endeavored to win the good-will of my fellow-citizens of all grades and classes, but I am modest enough to assure you this gracious, superb, and totally unexpected offering so completely affects me, as to leave me poor in speech, but rich in thankfulness and gratitude. My children and children's children shall treasure this souvenir, as the prize won in the big fight by at least the honest efforts of their sire.

THE LADIES.

Where is the man who, upon one occasion or another, has not been called upon to respond to the toast of "The Ladies?"

The following will enable the bashful youth to train his ideas in regard to the subject, and to prepare him with a reply when the mine shall have been sprung upon him. A ready response to this most popular of all toasts is as necessary as it is graceful and manly; so let there be no hemming or hawing, no hesitations, stutterings or stammerings, but start to your feet at once and dash into the subject as though you were enchanted at the privilege.

MR. PRESIDENT AND GENTLEMEN :

The high, the glorious privilege has been accorded me of replying to the toast of "The Ladies." You could not have selected a better man. Impossible! This you will say is rather cheeky of me; but when I tell you that there breathes not a man who reveres, loves, and adores the sex so much as I do, I ask you in all honesty could the chance of replying to the toast have fallen upon more deserving shoulders? The ladies, God bless them! what would we do without them—that nearer, clearer, dearer heaven of stars! In their smiles lie our sunshine, in their tears our anguish, in their beauty our heartaches. To the ladies we owe all the refining influences of our lives. They are the bright flowers by the wayside, the quite too tenderly utter beings, who make, mar, and marry us.

Then here, gentlemen, is my response to the toast of The Ladies. May they ever shine like stars in our firmament, never cease to captivate us, and, when we deserve it, of rewarding us. The ladies, God bless them!

ANOTHER REPLY.

The toast to which I have the honor of responding is one that awakes in the manly heart the latent chivalry of manhood. The toast of The Ladies embraces womanhood, the mother, the wife, the daughter, the sister, and if you will, gentlemen, the cousins and the aunts. Sir Walter Scott has beautifully written :

"O woman! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish rack the brow,
A ministering angel thou!"

What an admirable delineation of woman's character! In our hours of ease, on the stoop, or by the stove, there is no doubt of it, gentlemen, that she *is* uncertain, extremely coy, and infernally hard to please—I mean at times—while as for her variability, she is as whirly-giggy as a weather-cock on a windy March morning. But here is the other side of the shield, the silver one. Have any of you ever been ill? Have any of you ever been smitten to the earth by grief or misfortune? I hope not; but if such has been your bitter experience, turn back on your memories for the tender sympathy, the unfailing devotion, the ceaseless graciousness of woman. Gentlemen, this is a theme upon which, like the brook, I could "run on for ever;" yet, delightful as it is, time

flies, and perhaps the time that I am spending in reply to the toast of The Ladies, could be far better spent in their company. Gentlemen, I return you my most heartfelt thanks for being called upon by you to reply to such an important and gracious toast.

PRESENTATION OF A PIECE OF PLATE TO A PUBLIC OFFICIAL.

SIR—It affords me intense pleasure to represent a committee, who in turn represent your numerous friends and admirers, and on their behalf to present you with this as a very slight token of their appreciation of the admirable and praiseworthy manner in which you have discharged the onerous and responsible duties appertaining to your position. Your high character, integrity, and zeal have not only won the esteem and confidence of your friends, and of those brought into immediate contact with you, but have radiated far and wide, so that you have reached the position—one that is not only a credit to yourself but to the country at large.

That you may long continue in the service which you so admirably adorn is the wish of the many to whom your virtues are as household words. With this souvenir let me, on the part of those whom I represent, wish you health, happiness, and prosperity.

REPLY.

MR. — AND GENTLEMEN :

I need hardly say with what gratitude I accept this splendid gift—a gift which is dearer to me than all the “gold of Ind,” since it comes from a set of friends whose endorsement on a bad bill no amount of treasure could purchase.

Gentlemen, my aim in life has been to do what is right, to labor with earnestness, to win on the merits. My efforts have been crowned with success, and in this superb souvenir I recognize my crown of victory.

Gentlemen, your too flattering recognition will but serve as a greater impetus to exertion, and, rest assured that no effort on my part shall be wanting to repay in the fullest measure of my capacity the compliment it has pleased you this day to bestow upon me.

PRESENTATION TO A TEACHER BY THE YOUNG LADY PUPILS.

DEAR TEACHER :

It devolves upon me to offer you, in the name of the young ladies of this school, a slight token of our esteem and regard. To myself it is a source of immense pleasure to be made their mouthpiece on this occasion, since my sincere delight may make some amends for my many shortcomings. I am not now addressing you as our teacher, but as our friend, our dear, trusted, and very much tried friend; for how often have we not tried your temper and your forbearance! Dear Teacher, we will ever keep your image enshrined in our hearts, and shall look back to the school, not as an abode of penance, but rather of pleasure, since your kindness and your amiability have so rendered it—our studies having been illuminated by your patient graciousness. The little gift we offer you is of no intrinsic value, but it is rich in love, and gratitude, and respect. Please accept it, and with it our united hopes that your life will ever be as happy as you have made ours.

REPLY.

MY DEAR PUPILS :

I find that my heart is so anxious to speak that it has almost paralyzed my lips. Yes, it is indeed my heart that returns thanks to yours, for I know how pure, gentle, generous, strong, and true your hearts are, and my heart says to yours, “Oh, how deeply grateful I am for this tender mark of your affection!” My dear pupils, if you have been a little inclined to—what shall I call it? not idleness—no, no—well, a word from me ever brought you back from the plucking of the flowers of fancy, and a rebuke was but a reminder that you should tread the path of study for yet a little while. My life has been rendered doubly pleasant in the sunshine of your youth, and that I shall hold a place in your esteem and affection is indeed a delightful reward. That I thank you for your gift it is needless to say. Ah! would that one spark of eloquence of some of the masters over whom we have studied together were given to me now, to let you know what I feel on this occasion, which shall ever be remembered as one of the brightest resting-places in my journey through life.

A BACHELOR.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

It seems rather hard that I, an unfortunate bachelor, should be singled out to reply to this toast. Surely the misfortune of being unable to meet a fair one to share my lot ought to have won your sympathy, and to have left me unnoticed save by what the poets are pleased to term the “passing tribute of a sigh.”

Ladies, it is no fault of mine that I am unmarried. I detest, abhor loathe bachelorhood—would that I could find stronger terms of detestation—and if Fate, Kismet, Destiny, call it what you will, were to place some charming blushing maiden, such as I see around this board tonight, in my path, I would consider myself the most blessed of human mortals. What more contemptible being than the old bachelor! who so lonely, who so uncared for, who so infamously selfish! Of course ladies, I allude to those cravens who have feared to risk their fate on that sweet small word “Yes.” I must myself confess to a certain cowardice, and, with Sir Walter Raleigh, exclaim, “Fain would I climb but that I fear to fall.” Oh, if some fair lady would but say, “If thy heart fail thee do not climb at all!” That I live in hope, white blossomed Hope, I do not deny, and whatever be my fate now, in the presence of such charming and beautiful witnesses, I denounce bachelorhood and despise the bachelor.

THE HOST.

GENTLEMEN :

Fill your glasses till the beaded bubbles at the brim topple over. This is a toast that to honor is a sacred duty. I give you the health of our host—God bless him!

REPLY.

GENTLEMEN :

I thank you most heartily for the manner in which you have drunk the toast of my health. I assure you from my heart that I never feel so happy as when I see myself surrounded by my friends, and to behold one's friends enjoying themselves is a sight fit for the gods.

In the battle of life, which we are all compelled to fight, it becomes necessary to halt occasionally, stop by the wayside, and refresh. This brief snatching of pleasure at its best, makes us all feel that there is something worth living for, and that life without friends would indeed be but a dismal blank. I again thank you for your gracious good fellowship, and promise you that no effort shall be wanting on my part to enable you to propose the same toast, under the same circumstances, again, again, and yet again.

A DISTINGUISHED GUEST.

GENTLEMEN :

A duty, and a most pleasant one, devolves upon me of proposing the health of a very distinguished gentleman who has honored us with his presence this evening. Mr. — has done us the very great favor of joining our circle, and we feel the most intense pleasure in doing honor to a citizen who has so justly elevated himself in the opinions and good wishes of his fellow-countrymen. Were Mr. — absent I could talk about him for “a long hour by Shrewsbury clock,” but as he is present I will endeavor to spare his blushes, and come at once to the drinking of his health in a bumper. Gentlemen, long life, prosperity and happiness to our distinguished guest, Mr. —. Three times three and a tiger! Take the time from me! Hip, etc.

REPLY.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN :

Our worthy host intimated that he wished to spare my blushes. Now it is so long since I blushed, that I forget the sensation, but I declare that I could find this no occasion to blush, save for very pleasure, since to be thus introduced and thus toasted is indeed an occasion so pleasurable to me, that it shall ever remain impressed on the tablets of both my memory and my heart.

It is indeed a source of intense gratification to me to find that my little efforts, so far as they have gone, are appreciated, and by gentlemen such as I see around this board. True it is that I have done but little; but, gentlemen, I assure you my object is to do a great deal, and failing in that, I have but done my share. If, however, I am to do my share in this evening's bout, I am extremely grateful to our respected

chairman for giving me an opportunity of speaking so *easily* in the evening, as later on—well, least said soonest mended.

WEDDING-DAY ANNIVERSARY.

This is indeed an occasion where a speech is utterly unnecessary, for the fact of our being here speaks so eloquently, that the words even of a Demosthenes or a Cicero would fall flat, stale, and unprofitable.

Ladies and gentlemen, just cast a glance at that happy man, our host, and that beautiful lady, our hostess. See the "heavenly assenting smile" that speaks of the tenderest devotion, of a happiness those who wed whom they love, alone can know. The sunshine of unalloyed felicity is a nimbus to their lives, and it is well that, as the clock strikes another year upon their wedded bliss, we should be here to congratulate and say God bless them both.

That their journey of life will be always as smooth as it is now, and that they may ever be protected from storm and strait, is the sentiment I would couple with the health of our dear friends, Mr. and Mrs. —, on this the anniversary of their wedding.

REPLY.

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS:

As a rule, no husband is perfectly safe in replying for his wife, since that much-to-be-respected party is usually so capable of replying for herself, and as on too frequent occasions, her sentiments differ a little from his. On this occasion, however, I reply for my dear wife, knowing that every word I say will be endorsed by her, and that every beat of her heart is in accord with mine.

This is indeed a very joyous anniversary. It recalls the delicious rapture of the moment when I first could call my cherished partner by that sacred and endearing term of wife. It recalls the moment when she placed her happiness in my hands; and, my dear friends, I ask of you if that smile which puckers round her mouth now, does not do me infinite justice? If I have not been disappointed in her, I trust in God she has not been disappointed in me, and as years pass around, and, Darby and Joan like, we descend the hill, may this anniversary ever prove a resting-place for happy retrospection.

CRYSTAL WEDDING.

In this age of transparency, when glass has arrived at such perfection, it behooves us upon this, the anniversary of the crystal wedding of our dear friends, to "hold the mirror up to nature," and let them view themselves in the glass we now place before them. The lady smiles, as well she may, for Time's glass has not shaken out a single sand, and the fifteen years that have passed since she made our host the happiest of men, have left scarce a trace upon her pellucid brow.

The crystals which we present our dear friends upon this auspicious and delightful occasion are but a type of the transparency and brightness of their lives. May they never look on life "as through a glass, darkly." May the goblets which stand upon the festive board ever brim with the nectar distilled from love and harmony, and may these glass pitchers, and bowls, and decanters serve as crucibles through which their silver and golden anniversaries may yet be passed, and in this joyous and sympathetic company.

REPLY.

DEAR FRIENDS:

True it is that we have been married fifteen long years, yet it seems to me that — is just as young, just as fresh, just as lovely as when, on this day fifteen years ago, I took her for better or for worse. Yet, dear friends, I like this celebration. It reminds us that we have reached one of the great resting-places on the line, and that, whilst we look back with intense pleasure upon our journey, we also anticipate a great deal more farther on the road. It is indeed a source of intense gratification to us to find that, after fifteen years, so many friends come to visit us as we rest by the wayside, bringing gifts and bidding us to be of good cheer. These anniversaries are a sacred institution, and as you were good enough to express a hope that these beautiful goblets might prove crucibles, let me now engage each and every one of you not only to our silver and gold, but to our diamond weddings. I now drink your healths, thanking you for my fifteen-year partner from the bottom of my heart.

SILVER WEDDING.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

On a certain day just twenty-five years ago, a certain lady and gentleman entered for the race of life, and they have, I am delighted to declare, won the plate. Behold it! [Points to gifts.] They have, to continue the parlance of the turf, run neck and neck, and come in to this the winning-post in the easiest of possible canthers. Ladies and gentlemen, let us drink to the winners, and let us earnestly hope that they may be matched for the gold plate, and that we may be present when the "little event" comes off.

Ladies and gentlemen, need we say how deeply we congratulate our dear friends? Is not this occasion a lesson to maids and bachelors? Never were there words more applicable, "Go and do likewise." I shall conclude, for I see that you are all eager to do honor to my toast, by quoting Sheridan:

"Ah, sure a pair were never seen
So justly formed to meet by nature."

Their healths—God bless them!

GOLDEN WEDDING.

This is indeed a grand occasion, and one which, while it brings joy and thankfulness to our hearts, bears with it one of the most beautiful and touching lessons in the book of life.

Our respected and venerable friends have indeed reached the golden age of maturity. Hand in hand have they ascended the hill, hand in hand are they descending into the valley, a valley lighted with the undying and unshifting lamp of faithfulness, love, and devotion. What a privilege for us to be here to witness this beautiful sight, to see the bride and bridegroom of to-day in soul, in heart, the bride and bridegroom of this day half a century ago!

Time has sown fresh flowers in their dear old hearts; time has garlanded their brows with choicest flowers; time has but mellowed their affections, which, like good wine, has but improved with age.

We have come here to felicitate them upon the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage, to wish them many a long year yet before they snap the golden link that bound them together; that their bark may sail upon a golden sea, and that their sunset may be golden, is our united sentiment.

CONGRATULATING A CANDIDATE.

SIR—It is not in mortals to command success, but, what is better, they should endeavor to deserve it. You have been successful because you have deserved it, and we come to *exchange* congratulations, since whilst we rejoice for you, you undoubtedly rejoice with us. We have won a proud victory, but much of the glory is due to our standard-bearer. That you will conscientiously and worthily fill the office which has been bestowed upon you is beyond the region of doubt.

We have done honor to ourselves by proposing so clear-headed and able a candidate, and you, sir, will do honor to us by pursuing in your new position that pure and unsullied line of conduct which has this day led us to nominate you for election.

We do not attempt to crow over the defeated candidate. We can afford to be magnanimous, and since we are now so worthily represented, we feel assured that the enemy will regard you as the exponent of their opinions as much as we shall. Sir, we cordially congratulate you on a well merited success, and we congratulate you, and congratulate the good cause.

REPLY.

GENTLEMEN:

Deeds, not words, is my motto. That I thank you, and the energetic workers in the good cause which has led to this triumph, a triumph in which I am personally interested, need scarcely be said. I am as yet an untried man, but it is my purpose to prove to you that your votes of to-day have not been thrown away, and that you have honored an individual who will at least endeavor to prove his gratitude by head, heart, and unflinching work. The good cause has indeed triumphed, and I pledge myself that the trust you have this day reposed in me shall lose nothing from being placed in my hands. I shall endeavor to the best of my poor ability to walk in the straight path, and to discharge the duties appertaining to my office without fear or favor. Once more I thank you for the high honor which you have done me.