

THE POWER OF QUIET

By F. A. MITCHEL

Did you ever notice the difference between the quiet of a library and the busy whirl of the outside world? Doubtless you have. In a way it is the difference between a cemetery and that which is without the inclosure. But the cemetery contains the ashes and the living souls are elsewhere, while the library contains the living souls, the ashes being elsewhere.

Yet who has not realized the effect of situations? The influence of the atmosphere of a library once came home to me in a very telling effect. I am something of a dreamer, and doubtless any such influence would draw me more powerfully than another. But that is merely a matter to be noted. It is this effect of the atmosphere of a library upon myself, an effect that influenced my whole after life, that I am going to recount.

After a season of hard work I was enabled to take a rest. Instead of going pleasure hunting I sought a quiet country town where there were no possible means of excitement. The people living there must have been intellectually above the average, for they had established a very good library. It seemed to me that this was the very place I needed, so I went inside. There was not a person there save the librarian, and, since there was no one to disturb, it was not necessary for me to tread softly in going to her desk and speaking to her in a low voice. She doubtless had become accustomed to a uniform tone no matter how few or how many persons were there.

I received permission to nose about among the books and passed the morning doing so.

Frequently during hours when there was no one but the librarian present I went to her desk, ostensibly to ask her a question about some book, but really to chat with her. There was that in her voice, being in keeping with the place, that added to its other influences. Under this spell she grew to be to me a thing of beauty. Perhaps it was because she was the only living thing except myself there. Just as man chooses a representative—even if a stone idol—to symbolize his god, so did I choose the librarian to embody the myriad of thoughts inclosed in the silent books. She became to me the goddess of wisdom, of romance, of science, of poetry.

I spent a month in the place, and nearly every day I was in the library. It is to be expected from what I have said that I was falling in love with the librarian. Whether or no I was, I thought I was. At any rate, I made love to her. There is a difference between mere making love and making an avowal of love. In other words, I looked love and acted love.

One day the librarian asked me to come to see her at her home. I went in the evening. The house was such as a woman would be likely to live in who was obliged to give all her time for a mere pittance of \$500 or \$600 a year. The furniture was worn, but not in bad taste. The librarian came into the room, and the moment she spoke down fell all the illusion that had been growing up in me for a month.

She spoke in her natural voice. It was not harsh. It was a fair ordinary woman's voice, but it was not the modulated voice of the librarian. I must have shown the change in me by my expression, for suddenly the cordiality of her welcome vanished. I spoke in the voice I had been used to speaking in the library, but since my hostess did

not drop to that tone I at once abandoned it. It seemed to me that my embodiment of those who had transcribed their thoughts in the books had vanished and this person who was her wax figure had appeared in her place.

I passed an uncomfortable half hour with her, making an effort to be what I had been to her in the library, then left her.

I did not go to the library again for several days. When I did go there stood my embodiment of the shades of authors set up again on the pedestal on which I had placed her. She spoke to me in her library voice, but did not greet me with the smile she had often greeted me before. I made a few commonplace remarks, then went to an alcove, took down a book and began to read.

But I did not keep it up. I was troubled about my disillusion. I might not have been troubled had not the illusion returned. Which was the real condition, the library condition or the other? If I accepted the one would I do with the other? I could not accept both. The home condition would be the one I would have to live by if the librarian became my wife. Surely one could not dwell in a library.

I left the place and went home. But I did not leave the library or the librarian behind me. I pined especially for the latter. I returned after awhile to see her. This time I went directly to her house. After much bungling I made a confession. I admitted that I had fallen in love with her as a librarian, but not as her other self.

She burst into a laugh.

"I have been engaged to be married for a long while," she said. "So you see it doesn't make any difference to you whether you love me as a woman or a librarian."

But it did. Her engagement came to nothing, and a year later we were married. Fate decreed that I should get a treasure. As for me, I had nothing to do with my good fortune. I fell in love with a librarian and married a splendid woman.

Playing With Edged Tools

By BARBARA PHIPPS

"Sallie, you are the most incorrigible flirt I ever knew."

"I am no such thing."

"You have no conscience."

"I have as much conscience as you."

"I think I can prove that you haven't."

Here comes my classmate, Jim Emerson. We haven't met since commencement day, when we parted to go to our respective homes. I'll introduce you to him as my wife. You will show your want of conscience by making him act dishonorably toward his friend. You will weave your web about him, and when you have entangled him you will send him off with a broken heart."

This little dialogue occurred between Charles Waterman and Effie Meriwether, an engaged couple at Geneva, Switzerland. Waterman was to start for America in a few minutes. He had scarcely time to speak the words "broken heart" when Emerson came up to him, and the two men greeted each other heartily.

"I am awfully sorry to meet you just as I am starting for home, Jim," said Charles. "Let me present you to Mrs. W. She is going to remain abroad a few months. Going to stay here awhile?"

"Don't know. Reckon so."

The introduction was made, Charles gave his fiancée a parting kiss, got into the vehicle bound for the station and left her on the hotel porch with Emerson. Waterman was very proud to have won the pretty coquette from a host of admirers whom she had brought to her feet and had then sent them off to "get over it," which she declared they would do in a few months, if not a few days. Instead of blaming her want of feeling for his rivals it only served to cause him to put a higher value on himself. She had engaged herself to him; therefore he felt perfectly safe. The others she claimed she had never encouraged. Charles believed her and really in his heart had no doubt that she was perfectly honorable. They had been engaged a good while and as soon as they were both again on the other side of the Atlantic were to be married.

Waterman was delayed in London. His fiancée wrote him there upbraiding him for introducing her as his wife and accusing her at the same time of being capable of so bare an action as to win his friend for the purpose of throwing him over her shoulder. But she said nothing of having disabused Mr. Emerson of looking upon her as Jim's wife.

Waterman in due time sailed for home. A month after his arrival he saw in a list of passengers arriving by a certain steamer the name of his friend Emerson. Charles wondered what the upshot of his introduction of Jim to his fiancée had been. If nothing had occurred between Jim and Effie, Jim had doubtless obtained Charles' address from her and they would soon meet.

Several days elapsed and Jim did not put in an appearance. Charles chuckled. The dear girl had been at her old tricks. And yet he regretted that he had exposed his old friend to her wiles. "However," he thought, "he'll get over it like the rest of them. After my marriage with Effie I'll get him to dinner and we'll all be corks good friends. Effie will console him with one of her girl friends."

Effie wrote a brief letter from Genoa, stating that she was about to sail for New York. The letter came by the steamer on which she sailed. The first

thing Waterman knew of her arrival was through a telephone message from her. She explained his not having heard from her in time to meet her at the dock. He said he would call at once to see her.

When he reached her he was about to take her in his arms when she drew back, saying, "Wait a minute; I have something to say to you."

"You remember," she proceeded, "that you introduced your classmate, Mr. Emerson, to me, accusing me of being so base as to make him act dishonorably toward you."

"I remember," said Charles.

"Well, I yielded to the temptation so far as to keep the secret of our only being engaged."

"Of course you did, you little humbug, and proceeded to captivate him."

"I'm afraid I did act something like that, but I found him too honorable. I brought him down in one way but not in another. He refused to go back on you."

"Good for Jim!"

"Well, considering that he fell in love with me he found it hard to tear himself away from me. We saw a great deal of each other at Lucerne, and he joined our party to visit other places. One day I asked him if he would consider it dishonorable to you to take me away from you if I were only engaged to you—not married, you know."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said he wouldn't take me away from any one, but if I were free to marry and would marry him he would consider that he had a perfect right to marry me."

"Oh, he did, did he?"

"Yes, and I then told him that introducing me as your wife was only a pleasantry of yours."

"And he proposed to you, I suppose."

"No, he did not. He said that if there was any proposing between him and me it must come from me."

"I see, and that ended it."

"No, I proposed to him. Don't take on, Charlie. You'll get over it. I hope we shall always be friends."

The Leek or the Daffodil?

There are those today who maintain that the Welsh national emblem is not the leek, but the daffodil. Both leek and daffodil are known in the ancient British tongue as "ceannin," and it is held by those who favor the daintier flower that owing to the similarity of name the two became confused and that Shakespeare's influence, coupled with the Englishman's delight in making fun of Taffy and his leek, served to perpetuate the error. Be that as it may, the majority of Welshmen have agreed to wear the leek as "an honorable badge," and neither Saxon banter nor the indefiniteness of the historical data will avail to dislodge an ancient and a national custom.—London Mail.

Pulled the Rule Book on Him.

"How did you get along in your golf match?"

"Lost it."

"The other fellow outplayed you, eh?"

"No. I hit the ball as hard as he did, but he knew the rules better than I did and claimed six holes on technicalities."—Detroit Free Press.

A Left Handed Compliment.

A professor was expostulating with a student for his idleness when the latter said:

"It's of no use. I was cut out for a loafer."

"Well," declared the professor, surveying the student critically, "whoever cut you out understood his business."—Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph.

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