

¶A timid mind is not a petty mind.

BIG SHOTS ARE SHY

SHYNESS is a badge of pride rather than of shame, if you learn how to handle it. As Dr. Louis E. Bisch points out, only the finest natures, the best people, have sufficient sensitivity to be troubled by shyness.

Your thunderous, blustering boor who bangs on every door he comes to in an offensive determination to get his "rights" is never shy. He has a cast-iron nerve. But there is always a vein of gold in the shy nature; gold is malleable, can be beaten so fine that 300,000 sheets of it would be only an inch thick, but it is still gold. Cast-iron rusts and weakens and cracks easily with a whining metallic sound.

"All genuine superiority grows out of a sense of inferiority," says Dr. Henry C. Link. "The person who admits his inferiority, and then does something about it, develops superiority."

Is that true? You have only to look at the record to prove it.

Are you terrified by the idea of making a speech in public? This brand of shyness is extremely common to important people. The late Cardinal Hayes

was a painfully shy, retiring lad who reddened with embarrassment when called upon to speak before his classes. He would have preferred the ways of a lonely parish priest, yet in later life his high administrative office made it necessary for him to make numerous addresses which he did superbly well.

Only after ten years of broadcasting did Amos and Andy muster up enough nerve to admit outsiders to the studio when they were broadcasting. Important radio executives, sponsors, personal friends, members of their family—all were barred by this famous radio team who could not bear to have people staring at them when they were working. Lowell Thomas was very shy during his first few weeks of broadcasting and he, too, insisted on being alone at the mike. Even after years of broadcasting his hands still shook while he was waiting to go on the air.

O. O. McIntyre was so terrified by the thought of speaking into a microphone that he turned down an offer of \$7,000 a week for a fifteen-minute radio program. McIntyre was ex-

tremely shy of telephones because of a period as publicity manager for Florenz Ziegfeld, during which the *Follies* producer constantly interrupted him at all hours of the day and night with telephonic orders. Nor did McIntyre ever overcome shyness of crowds and people; many of the celebrities of whom he wrote so intimately in his famous column he never met.

To overcome his shyness of speaking in public, friends advised author Christopher Morley to fix his gaze on some one member of the audience and address his remarks to that person. When Morley came nervously upon the stage his eyes—his vision is not too keen—swept the audience and lighted upon an outstanding figure in the fourth row. She appeared to be a woman of ample proportions wearing an impressive assortment of furs.

As Morley warmed into his subject, he observed that he was holding his "target" spellbound. Not once did she move. His shyness vanished and his speech was a smashing success. Afterward, receiving compliments, Morley was asked how he had done it.

"I just followed your advice and talked right at that woman in the fourth row," he said.

His friends looked blank, then roared. "That wasn't a

woman—that was the chair a lot of us piled our coats on!"

Stage fright is akin to fear of public speaking, yet the greatest figures of the theatre are not immune after years of public appearances. Paderewski, after fifty years of concert appearances throughout the world, is still bothered by stage fright. So is Alfred Lunt. Tallulah Bankhead is so shy about getting out on the stage to play her role that her mouth gets dry and she puts vaseline on her lips to keep them from sticking to her teeth. Raymond Massey, currently starring as Abraham Lincoln on the Broadway stage, is among the shyest of celebrities.

Is it crowds or people that make you shy? Not even royalty is immune! Queen Mary was so shy as a child that she often burst into tears, and her first sight of Queen Victoria brought a fit of sobbing. Yet Queen Mary's whole life has been one of public appearances, of being stared at by people, and her regal stateliness is a mask which hides her natural shyness.

Henry Cavendish, one of the greatest names in chemistry, was so shy where women were concerned that if he so much as caught sight of one of the female servants about his house she lost her job. His shyness extended to men as well and included all strangers, however

illustrious. On one occasion, at a meeting of the Royal Society Club, a friend approached Cavendish with a companion in tow. It was the Baron von Plattnitz, the leading scientist of Austria, who had come all the way to London to meet the man he considered the most brilliant scientist of the age.

Before the introduction was half over, Cavendish, shuffling and fumbling nervously with the buttons of his coat, had scuttled away like a frightened deer and did not rest until he arrived safely at his home.

T. E. Lawrence—Lawrence of Arabia, who virtually single-handed carried on one of the most successful military operations of the World War in the Far East—was shy to the point of self-effacement, so shy that when celebrities and governments wished to honor him, he stepped out of the world by enlisting as an air force private under an assumed name.

In discussing Lawrence with his father one day, a young Englishman remarked: "He must have been a remarkable person, truly outstanding."

"Why, you met him," the father reminded him.

"I did? When?"

"Don't you remember the man to whom I introduced you in London on the steps of the British Museum some years ago?"

The young man was dumbfounded. He did indeed remember the man he had been introduced to—a slight, shy person who wouldn't look at him and who hurried away to avoid speaking.

Webb Miller, noted foreign correspondent for United Press, tells in his autobiography, *I Found No Peace*, how he overcame shyness. In two important departments of life he faced obstacles: work and women. As a reporter he used to walk up and down in front of a building before screwing up enough courage to enter and interview an important person.

"In my struggles to overcome my natural handicaps as a reporter in Chicago," he says, "I made what to me were two astounding discoveries; first, *if I liked people and showed it they usually liked me*; second, *most human beings suffered more or less from the same disabilities that I did*.

"The late Charles Erbstein, the famous Chicago criminal attorney, told me the secret. Although of unprepossessing appearance, he was one of the most widely liked men in Chicago, and could win the sympathy of a jury or anyone he encountered sooner than any other person I had met. I asked him how he did it and he told

me those two simple principles. So I set about trying to like people, always keeping in mind that

they were perhaps as diffident as I was." —*James Gordon Dustin, condensed from Your Life.*

