

### Silent Talkers

That very admirable category in which are classed those people of evident good taste! How delightful to meet one of these rare personalities after a long day of keeping up with the world, a long day probably cluttered up with political or economical problems, with graft and greed, with garish advertisements, and modernly called 'rackets.' On every corner-newstand, in every saleable space, over every doorway, are bright, splashy advertisements, brilliantly-lighted signs and anything to elude the commonplace. Then there are blowing horns and screeching brakes of a score of equally well-advertised makes of automobiles, the crashing din of thundering trucks and streetcars, police whistles, street vendors—all this a replica of the ancient Eastern Bazaar; although those old sleepy fellows did it all in a much more calm and placid manner. These noisy fantastic things, how they do shout out their cheap emptiness. How grateful ought we to be then, for a few reflections on the really fine things which life holds out to us.

A friend once told me of an experience he had had while studying fine art in Europe. He had been in Berlin a few days and was stopping at his club. One evening, as he was admiring a very fine tapestry in the club lobby, a fine-looking old gentleman approached him and began to discuss its origin with him. He found this man so very interesting that he spent the next day searching vainly for him about the club.

But the next evening fate and a very obsequious waiter placed them together at dinner, and my young friend grasped at this chance to deepen the gentleman's acquaintance.

According to my friend's description the old gentleman was a striking figure in his neat but conservatively-cut dinner-coat, and his keen eyes and iron grey hair gave him the appearance of an intellectual.

They chatted lightly of the current plays and paintings and finally the Doctor, for such was his profession, extended my friend an invitation to visit him in his home.

It was a bright day and every leaf and flower whispered a warning of autumn as my friend approached the sedate old stone house that was the doctor's home. He was received at the door by a servant and ushered into the



care of the Doctor himself, who was quietly polite in seeing to his comfort. They spent an hour having tea and talking on current questions and then the Doctor took my friend to his studio to show him his collection of paintings. My friend was enjoying himself immensely all this time, and not alone in the collection but also in the tasteful surroundings.

From the moment that he first set eyes on the interior of the old squat stone house, he had observed the quiet beauty of every apartment of every room. The plain blue Persian rugs and chair suites of the same shade, the tapestries of varying browns, the ebony carvings and the quaint old steins and drinking mugs of a former century. All this set off, with the startlingly white pillars and mouldings, in Ionic. In the doctor's den were many delightful little trinkets in old beaten bronze and brass, looking almost frightened to be set apart in that sombre den in ebony and dark-green leather. There were tall bookcases in which they found the very best of books, copies of Shakespeare, Dickens, Goldsmith, Shelly, and Keats. Even as they discussed Shakespeare the soft chords of "Rhapsody in Blue" floated up to them from the piano. The doctor's wife was a marvellous pianist, and my friend only took his leave after begging that lady to play some from Rachmaninov and Beethoven.

As my friend afterwards explained, he had never before met a man who so impressed him and yet talked so little.

How singular and unique is a man like this one, how very gratifying to one's better self! how very impressively does this man silently tell one that he is apart from the hurry and scuffle, from the sordid coarseness of life.

When a man of this type talks, he expresses himself in a very few well-chosen words and unconsciously reveals his deep knowledge and exposes his admirable habit of keeping well read on every modern topic . . . . .

These first very garish signs of modern city life strive and strain to attract you and when you yield they show their cheap shallowness; but the modest stone house set in the quiet square, secure and contented in its rareness, smiles to itself and watches for the appreciative friends of the Doctor.

J.D.F., '35