Secretary to Mrs. Roosevelt

Here is a delightful story regarding Mr. Roosevelt which Mrs. Roosevelt will enjoy hearing. Read it, and pass the story along - would be good in a biographical history.

Mrs. Vincent
The first minute

By Margaret Lee Runbeck

"Neither do you," he said, "I'll tell you a secret; then you'll never need to be scared again. Everyone on earth is shy, self-conscious and unsure of himself. Everybody's timid about meeting strangers. So if you'll just spend the first minute you're in the presence of a stranger trying to help him feel comfortable, you'll never suffer from self-consciousness again. Try it."

In his handsome face I saw a kindness that made me suddenly aware of what a fine thing a man with sympathy and insight in his soul can be.

"I will try it," I said very loudly, from the bottom of my heart.

Then suddenly, to my horror, I realised that "The Blue Danube" had come to its end, and that my voice had blazed out like a bullet in the silence. Our principal was staring at me, and all my classmates were gazing open-mouthed, and it was a moment which easily could have toppled into neighborhood disgrace.

But the man beside me laughed with assurance, and reached out and patted my shoulder in such a friendly way that everyone in the hall felt good, and pleased, and friendly. And in spite of myself, I had done exactly what my English teacher had said I must do—

I had talked pleasantly with our honored guest, so that everyone would feel at ease.

I don't remember how the speeches went off, either his or mine. But I do remember how happy I was, how wonderful the whole occasion seemed. Most of all I remember the advice of the man who generously gave a frightened, unattractive child his secret for getting over discomfort by losing self in helping a stranger.

I've used his secret thousands of times; I've watched it work with all kinds of strangers; and increasingly I've been grateful to the man who gave it to me and often wished I had remembered who he was so that I could tell him of my gratitude.

Recently I had to dispose of an attic full of valueless treasures hoarded through the years. In a box with a few old letters I found the Commencement Day Program of Eastern High School, Washington, D. C. It has a blue and silver seal on the front, and a line which says: Commencement Address, by the Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant-Secretary of the Navy.

It is too late now for me to tell him of my gratitude. But I can pass along his secret to help others, as he passed it along to help me.

-- Vincent
"Letter to the World" (below) portrays aspects of the poet, Emily Dickinson. "Salem Shore" (top right) delineates the emotions of women whose men are at sea. "Every Soul is a Circus" (bottom right) reveals the comic vagaries of which the human mind is capable.

BY

FLORENCE VON WIEN