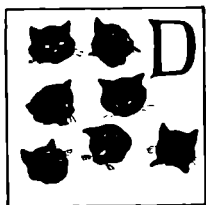


## A Telepathic Wooing.

BY JAMES BUCKHAM.



R. AMSDEN was utterly and hopelessly in love with beautiful Miriam Foote. But, in spite of his six feet of splendid manhood — or, perhaps, because of them—the young doctor was so timid in the presence of the fair sex, and particularly in the presence of the fascinating Miriam, that he could no more bring himself to utter a syllable of sentiment to that young woman than he could walk up to the venerable and dignified president of the State Medical Association and tweak his nose! The two things seemed equally preposterous and impossible.

At this juncture of affairs, curiously enough, there fell into the hands of Dr. Amsden a book that offered a magical solution of the problem that perplexed him,— viz., how to make love to the woman who had ensnared his heart, without being conscious of doing it. This book was called “The Law of Psychic Phenomena,” and its central theory was that the “subjective mind,” or soul, of any person, by a process of auto-suggestion, may enter into communication with the subjective mind of another person, at any distance whatsoever. A condition of sleep, either cataleptic or natural, is induced by the agent in himself; but previously to falling to sleep he must concentrate his whole mental energy and will-power upon the determination to convey a certain image, or message, or both to the subjective mind of the person with whom he wishes to communicate. Then away goes his spirit — his phantasm — while he is buried in unconscious slumber, appears in his very image to the person designated, and delivers the message with his very voice and manner. Truly, a marvelous theory, and of untold significance to timid lovers and bashful solicitors of every kind.

According to this theory, Dr. Amsden, in order to make tele-

pathic love to Miriam Foote, need simply drop to sleep, on a certain night, with a strong determination to send his phantasm to the young woman with an eloquent plea of affection. That was all. It was not even necessary for him to furnish the general substance, introduction, or any portion of this glowing address. He need simply specify that it should be passionate and rich in verbal color, — ordering a proposal much as he would a dinner at a first-class hotel, with perfect confidence that at the proper time it would be served in proper form. To be sure, this method of wooing was not in strict accordance with the traditional etiquette of such affairs. It might even be considered that this proposal by a sort of phantasmal proxy was hardly fair to the object of the experiment. A ghost is, after all, but a ghost, whether it be attached to a bodily tenement or be simply a spirit at large, and even the most heavenly minded young woman might cherish a prejudice in favor of a fleshly lover. On the other hand, however, the choice lay not between two methods of wooing, but between this and none at all; and how easy, how delightful a method of making a proposal of marriage. It could all be performed, like a painful surgical operation, during merciful sleep. Then the lover when next he met the lady in his every-day person would know by her manner whether she had accepted or rejected him. The more Dr. Amsden considered this fascinating project the more trivial seemed his scruples against its fulfilment. Indeed, he asked himself judicially, was it not a fundamental doctrine of metaphysics that only the soul was real, and so-called matter was simply the shadow cast by the spirit? This being the case, his vulgarly named ghost was in reality no ghost at all, while his bodily presence was the real phantasm.

Having arrived at this comfortable, though to the lay mind slightly abstruse, conclusion, Amsden wavered no longer. "I will do it," he said, jumping to his feet. "I will do it to-night — or — no, a few days must be given to subduing the flesh and concentrating the energies of the subjective mind. On Saturday evening, at the time of my regular weekly call, I will make an end to this painful uncertainty. Though I cannot but hope that she looks upon my suit with favor, I shall never dare to broach the subject of love openly in the flesh. My ghost — or, at least,

what is vulgarly known as a ghost — shall speak, and I will abide by the result.”

On his return from dinner that evening Dr. Amsden locked all the doors and darkened all the windows of his apartments. Then, after smoking a meditative cigar, he went to bed. It was barely eight o'clock in the evening when his head touched the pillow, but, as he had planned to send his image to Miss Foote at precisely nine o'clock, before that young lady should have retired to her chamber, he wished to have ample time to get himself to sleep. Besides, he was really tired and drowsy, which was certainly a favorable condition for his experiment. He had feared that he would be excited and nervous; but already the suggestion of sleep which he had been constantly reiterating for the past hour was beginning to tell upon his brain. The formula, “I am about to go to sleep, I am becoming sleepy, I sleep,” was having a most magical effect.

Dr. Amsden dropped into the misty chasm of slumber in less than fifteen minutes after getting to bed. But that fifteen minutes had been spent in strenuous command, on the part of the objective mind, that the subjective mind should go, at precisely nine o'clock, to the home of Miss Foote, present itself in the exact and correct image of the lover, and make an ardent appeal to the affections of the lady.

In about two hours Amsden awoke, bathed in perspiration, and feeling thoroughly exhausted. He was not conscious of having dreamed at all, and yet it seemed to him as if he had just shaken off a most horrible nightmare. He arose, lit the gas, and consulted his watch. It was just ten o'clock. “Thank heaven,” he cried, “I did not wake before the time!” He went back to bed, and fell instantly into the deep slumber of complete exhaustion, from which he did not wake until late the next morning.

For two days he did not see Miss Foote. Then he summoned up courage to call upon her. She came downstairs looking pale and anxious, and the moment that Amsden's eyes fell upon her his heart began to throb with suffocating violence. Undoubtedly his experiment had succeeded as far as the proposal was concerned — but should his attitude be that of the accepted or rejected lover?

Hardly noticing his stammering expressions of solicitude for

her altered looks, Miriam led the way into the drawing-room, and, motioning him to a chair, seated herself in a dim corner at the other side of the room. Then, with her blue eyes lowered and her fingers twisting nervously, she said: —

“Dr. Amsden, I owe you an apology. When you called two nights ago and asked me to be your wife I was too much agitated to answer you. To tell the truth,” she continued, reddening a little, “the eloquence of your words, their poetry and melody, so surprised and overcame me that I could not answer as you deserved. When I left you and walked to the other side of the room it was only that I might gain possession of myself, and when I looked up and found you gone —”

“Gone!” exclaimed Amsden, groaning audibly.

“Yes, gone like a spirit (here Miss Foote paused, while Amsden clutched at his chair, feeling as though his whole body were turning to sand and dribbling down upon the floor) without a word of good-bye, I feared that I had mortally offended you and that you would never come back to —”

“Then you were not angry because my ghost — because I left like a ghost? You wanted me to come back? But why?”

“I — I think you ought to know,” said the girl, blushing.

And the next moment Dr. Amsden was kneeling at her feet.

“I did it in a dream — no, I don’t mean that — I mean this is a dream. I ought to explain.”

“No, don’t try. I understand,” said Miriam softly.

The girl’s head sank forward on his shoulder. She was crying a little, but she suffered her lover’s arms to slip around her waist, and into his trembling hand she pressed her own.

It was done, the impossible, the inconceivable! And even Amsden felt in his heaving heart that he had never done anything so easy and so utterly delightful in his whole life.

It was true that Miriam did not understand, but Amsden felt that at such a juncture any explanations would be not merely out of place, but even indelicate.

To his credit be it said, however, that on one occasion before his marriage he attempted to confess to Miriam all the circumstances of his proposal; but while he was still struggling with his introduction she stopped him with a peremptory gesture.

“I don’t understand a word about subjective and objective minds,” she said, in a wounded voice. “All I know is that you made me the most beautiful proposal I had ever heard — I mean imagined — but of course if you want to take it back by saying that you were not responsible at the time — ”

Whereupon Amsden was obliged to consume two delightful hours in assuring his sweetheart that he was a blundering fool, and that his metaphysical nonsense, translated, meant that it was his best self that had made that eloquent proposal, and that he was only afraid his every-day self was not one tenth good enough for her.

