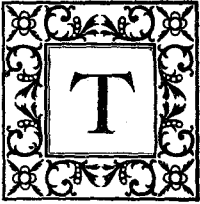


# Mainsprings of Men

BY WHITING WILLIAMS

Author of "Horny Hands and Hampered Elbows," etc.

## II. WHO HURTS OUR FEELINGS?



HE plant manager was talking:

"After long and fairly sad experience we have learned always to find from the men threatening trouble how we hap-

pened to *hurt their feelings*. After we have squared that up, the settlement of the wage or other dispute is easy."

"Sure!" adds the labor leader. "Many's the time we've kept arguing and demanding for hours, when ten minutes of friendly talk would have finished it—all because the boys had been made sore, and so had to have the satisfaction of 'rubbing it in' as far as it would go."

Of one thing we may be sure: the superintendent whom we left rushing up to quell the sudden walk-out of his tool-makers, with his list of instincts in his hand, is bound to find his men acting less on the promptings of their logical reasonings as workers than of their feelings as just plain human beings. Few if any of them have failed to bring along with them into the factory their own individual portion of such complications as the "super" may have noticed in the morning paper.

Of course, the boss may become still further convinced than before that his obstreperous strikers are expressing their inborn wish or instinct for acquisition and ownership as a first step toward the luxurious satisfactions pictured in some advertisements in a near-by column.

But surely he will get farther if he sees at the bottom of his incipient revolt some universal root desire that lies back not only of the frivolous vanities of current fashion or the love of home and family, but also of men's wish everywhere to think well of themselves.

It is exactly such a wish that I have found running beneath all those lines of thought and feeling, by which each of the various groups called "Capital" or "Labor," "Bourgeois" or "Bolshie," contrives to make its belligerent view-

point and programme appear *to itself* entirely reasonable and justifiable. It is exactly this, also, which furnishes that common denominator the superintendent needs, before he can determine whether his machinists' apparently overactive instinct for acquisition may somehow be offset by a reawakened interest in, say, workmanship. It is this universal master wish that requires some definition that will not, like "Gregariousness" or "Emulation," merely set it off from the others such as Fear or Anger, Curiosity or Submission; but will tie all these up together—in addition to explaining why the primitive compulsions of saving our physical skin now affect our feelings less than do the modern necessities of saving our social "face." Such a definition would go like this:

*In organized society to-day the "wheels" of each of us are turned, for better or for worse, by our mainspring desire to enjoy the feeling of our worth as a person among other persons,—that individual feeling requiring always for its fullest satisfaction the surest possible substantiation at the hands of some particular group whose approval happens, at the moment, to appear especially pertinent and desirable.*

Working our way to Europe on the cattle-boat, we college boys found the "fo'castle's" food so thoroughly uneatable that every afternoon we lined up, below decks, around a stealthy steward and his plate of leavings stolen from the captain's table. For us all it was a moment of fierce ordeal. Hunger urged to greedy unfairness. Honor—our standing with the other hungry seven—pleaded for moderation. The existence of society to-day indicates that honor has usually won. And we make victory in similar circumstances constantly easier by furnishing some measure of food and shelter to practically every one. But while we thus relieve the pressure of the bodily wants, the number of those who confess their spiritual and social defeat in suicide mounts into the thousands, and the cloud of those who

unite with their neighbors to make war upon their fellow citizens for what they believe their honor, rises into millions.

The material nature that abhors a vacuum—whether it be ethereal space or empty stomach—is to-day less trouble-

approvals and disapprovals of our chosen "set," and of the multitude of other less pertinent and more distant sets around us.

"Why, if I were a policeman," so my youngster, at the age of five, explained the latest shift of his life's ambition, "then peo-



## ZOSIA COME HOME

### BABY WANTS YOU

Baby Tresa is crying for her mother. Unless you come home immediately baby will have to be sent to hospital; refuses to eat. If you are sick, let me know. If you are not, come home now. If you are afraid to come, write and I will straighten things out.

**Peter Pashkowsky**  
6205 Thackerray Ave. Cent. 1597 W.

Such complications as the "super" may have noticed in the morning paper.—Page 233.

some in its requirements than is the "human nature" of our organized society, by virtue of which we abhor the spiritual cipher—the one who in reality does not *count* one. To each of us the most important thing in all the living of our lives is the message of the metre which registers the distance we have achieved away from the hateful zero of insignificance among our fellows. If that were all, then selfishness might have its way. But just because this distance is so supremely vital to our happiness, we dare not trust the reading of the dial to our own individual eyes: somehow, somewhere, in the eyes of the few or of the many, our findings must secure the backing of a body of less prejudiced witnesses.

The moment we come to hanker for the substantiation of one kind or group of witnesses rather than another, that moment we start toward establishing the precise direction and orbit of our planetary career in the social universe about us.

To understand the doings or misdoings of our fellows—or to exert any leadership upon them—that is to see in them merely the sequence of the interplay of these two forces; the thrust of this master wish for individual worth, working its way out through the spaces of our present-day social firmament, according to the restrictive pushes or the compelling pulls of the

ple would ask me where to go, and I would tell them—and they would go there."

Apparently the chief obstacle to his sense of progress into the satisfactions of personality had been the necessity of requiring the services of a traffic cop—in the presence of the wondrous eight-year-olds who crossed without assistance!

"Well, you see, I could sit in the engineer's seat," so he explained a later direction of the same underlying wish; "and when I pulled the throttle—ever so little—like this—then the whole train would move and leave all the passengers' friends on the platform."

Later he may wish to be the maker of a speech which furnishes a new moral objective to a nation, or the pusher of the executive button which establishes a wider economic margin in the families of thousands of employees; but for the present the wires of such successions are too hidden for his fancy. Quite certainly he will shortly find himself in such contact with the general American public that he will be tempted to accept, as final for him, the measurement of the particular tape-line which that public happens to employ. That will mean the pursuit of one thing—wealth. For, at the present moment at least, the dollar furnishes the yardstick by which the great body of our fellow citizens habitually endeavors to

determine the exact degree of any member's accomplishment. That yardstick's application is so beautifully simple; so patently is the possessor of one million dollars demonstrated by it to be just ten times as much of a man as the possessor of only one hundred thousand dollars! All that being so, the pulpit, the editor's chair, the city school, or the college quadrangle will be passed by because they furnish the approval of too small—and too discriminating—a body of "substantiators." The same choice of the approval of the most numerous rather than the most careful judges will also require him to refuse all thought of the life of self-sacrifice, in, say, foreign missions; because that would necessitate his dependence upon the approbation of what is sure to seem too slight and intangible a group—namely, the One Supreme Person.

But it is not at all certain that here in America the majority will always exercise upon the choices of its members the colossal pressure which follows from its use of money as a measure of excellence. For nations copy us individuals in changing their yardsticks from time to time.

"Sorry, Dick, I'd like awfully to try the new speedster to-night, but—er—well—you see, Jim—Lieutenant Jim—is in town." In such ways our daughters, back in the summer of '17, announced to their friends that our traditional and world-famous "speedollarter" had suddenly given over its pre-eminence as the metre of achievement to the chevrons, bars, and eagles which denoted the distance travelled by their wearers from the comparative insignificance of the "rookie."

To-day, in South America, the civilized majority uses the money measure with what strikes us as extreme carelessness. The business man takes days of leisurely lunching and dining with the aggressive young salesman from North America not because time or money is of no value but in order to make sure that the final business dealings will be between gentlemen. Pecuniary profit, that is, counts less in the reading of the South American gentleman's public honor-rating than does the maintenance of his inherited social pre-eminence as a person of outstanding birth and established culture. The visiting salesman's problem is merely to make it evident that under his guidance there need

be no conflict between the two. (Incidentally, the heads of certain New York bond houses report that exactly the same is already true in the case of many possessors of inherited wealth and culture in Boston, Philadelphia, and other of our older cities.)

The same preference for the concrete mile-stones of established status instead of the shifting sand-piles of current financial acquisition, tends to bind the South American for life to the social level into which he was born. So the man who would get a convincing measure of popular approval for a larger sense of his personal worth than his birth may happen to afford, finds two doors open—and only two. In the church he may become an adviser to presidents or prime ministers—provided only that his brains are equal to the task. Or in the army he may become the savior of his country—if his valor serves sufficiently. Thus, by the mere denial of one majority measurement and the permission of another, our Southern neighbors arrange for the two orbits which distinguish their political and social skies—the power of the clergy and the predominance of politics and revolutions.

Even with us money has slight attractiveness in itself: the important thing is the amount of distinction and social position it can give its possessor as compared with others in his own or near-by circles. As assistant to a college president and later in handling the financial side of federated social work in Cleveland, the big discovery was that the philanthropic spirit has less to do with finance than with feeling. A man is as rich, and so as generous, as he happens to *feel*—or as poor. How he feels depends mainly upon his standing, not with those who may happen to live in his own square but with those who move in his particular circle.

"My good man, I can't think of it"—so Russell Sage is reported to have responded when "pan-handled" for a dime. "Why, sir, I have a million dollars lying in the bank that's not earning a penny toward family expenses. Come around some day when I am making money!"

"'Lefty Louie' Loses Temper," so the head-lines told how, a few days before his electrocution, the murderer was suffering from hurt feelings. As in the case of all of us, these had come from a sudden threat against his sense of worth as a per-

son among the others of the group with which he had—consciously or unconsciously—cast in his lot. A false friend had charged him with the one crime which for every self-respecting murderer or thief constitutes—and must always constitute—the cardinal sin: “snitching on his pals!”

“Thanks for a cigarette, eh, mate?” a half-drunken woman inquired of me from among the crowd of customers in a Newcastle (England) public house, adding: “Yes, I’ve just done twenty-one days for bein’ drunk and assaultin’ the bloody officer. I can kick a man pretty precise when I tries, y’ understand? . . . Why, ’ello, ’usband Jack, back again! . . . I call ’im ’usband because the court makes ’im pay me a pound a week for my baby. . . . *No, thanks, if I smoked it now, everybody ’round ’ere would talk!*”

Our choices are not hers—unless her crowd comes to be ours. But for us as well as for her, the choice of our crowd—whether it be thieves or thinkers, financiers or philosophers—serves inevitably to set the “Stop” or “Go” for restricting or releasing all our powers of soul and body.

The passionate necktie, cane, or spats of our colored fellow citizen say something about his love of finery. But in that he is not greatly different from us all. The real difference comes from the fact that his clothes are about the only way in which he can let money talk about his success, seeing that the rest of us restrain him from, for instance, the fine residence by which we are apt to “tell the world” the story of our own attainments. For the same reason he is likely to seek membership in those societies where the blackest of the black can enjoy the thrill of having his acquaintances make up in intensity of recognition what they lack in range as they kowtow to him as the “Supreme Grand Guardian of the Exalted Shrine of the Holy Universe.”

In the same way, the Chosen People have come to set what the rest of us are prone to consider an overvaluation upon financial acquisition, not so much because this instinct exerts a stronger pull upon them as because Gentile short-sightedness established the Pale. By so doing we forced into one single area all that wish for worth which under more permissive conditions would have spread itself with a more agreeable thinness over a wider field.

In the same manner, also, poverty tends to force into the sector beyond the grave the enjoyment of the social recognitions so deeply desired but so generally denied in the daily lives of our least fortunate fellows. It is the vast tragedy of our times that millions of insurance policies are expended down to their last penny—and expended gladly—on an outstandingly successful social function arranged by the neighborhood’s most expert society engineer—the undertaker! Others of us who are apparently condemned to a life of healthful but eventless and unnoticeable health, are not infrequently made secretly happy by the kindly offices of some catastrophe which brings the pre-eminence of a bandage, a pair of crutches, or perhaps a helpless invalidism. Few mischances in life are worse than a modest good fortune which seems merely to “send us to Coventry!”

“He is one of the few”—so a wit has said of Chauncey Depew—“who have lived beyond eighty without exchanging their emotions for symptoms.”

“Say, Sarge, for heaven’s sake,” appealed a lonesome doughboy; “read out my name for a letter to-morrow! I’ll know there ain’t none, but gee, I can’t stand it to be the only guy that’s never called out!”

Something of the same appeal for that group substantiation without which all is misery because all is uncertainty, undoubtedly explains, three times out of four, the person we mark—and shun—as an egotist. Like the rest of us, his feelings have been most hurt where he is most sensitive; and, like the rest of us, he is most sensitive at exactly the point of his greatest desire—where the very intensity of his wish makes all but the most convincing of confirmations appear inadequate and disappointing. So, not because he believes most in himself but because he *doubts* most, he whistles to keep his courage up—and offends us by using the spurious or genuine assurances he has elsewhere obtained as bait upon the hook of his desperate hope for a “Well done” from us.

Germany rattled her sabre only when she found that the master wish for world leadership, developed by her newly acquired and therefore doubtful nationality, failed to get the hoped-for, the indis-



pensable, world-wide corroboration even after an amazing commercial expansion had been added to the victories of 1870. In the same way, a generation ago, Europe was constantly making us unhappy by giving us her approbation in general but withholding it at exactly our tenderest spot—the spot, namely, where the intensity of our wish for the acknowledged stability of our social and political culture was equalled only by our uncertainty as to its fulfilment.

It is out of the dangerous delicacies of these meeting-points of wish and fear in the hearts of peoples as well as persons, that the hurts arise which lead first to the severance of relations and then to the declaration of war.

So, too, it is not so much the absence as the abnormal delicacy of this tender spot that, according to the experts, distinguishes the insane. This, rather than the “meaningless and inscrutable medley” we wrongly attribute to their thoughts, is likely to prompt their cutting across lots into abnormal methods for securing the hoped-for confirmations. So we fear the insane just as we do the real egotist—because they will not be guided by the halter of our approvals into the established paths of acknowledged social safety. But the mind of either of them is only slightly more distant from our own than is the mind of one of our political or industrial factions from that of another. “To the Conservative the amazing thing about the Liberal is his incapacity to see reason,” as W. Trotter puts it.

“Judge L—— is probably still unable to understand why the American Bar Association regarded his conduct with ‘unqualified condemnation’”—so runs an editorial—“and why bills prohibiting federal judges from accepting private emoluments have been introduced in Congress. . . . Thus, even in the best of men there may be a certain obtuseness of taste, a queer little anæsthetic zone.”

It is the twilight of this zone, wherein the lamp of logic is darkened by the thin but effective film of the heart’s-bottom wish for self-certainty, that explains so many of the misdoings of all of us, whether judge or criminal or in-between sane or insane. For most of our transgressions are our mistaken and unsocial, albeit practically automatic, short-cuts at the protec-

tion of our self-respect, when it has been threatened beyond the possibility of any less extreme measures of defense. We are entirely too quick to ascribe to the criminal a lack of desire to count among his fellows. In many cases his “anæsthetic zone” is caused by a mentality too low to care for our guidance in the choice of his methods of achievement; in others he perhaps feels himself the victim of some affront too deep to be atoned for by any of the accepted measures. “Law or no law, I notice that the man who argues with his fists is always respected,” says “Moleskin Joe.” In still others the chief desire is the same as that of the nurse who confessed to wrecking trains “in order to get a few thrills.”

“At all these fires we noticed a boy who appeared extremely proud of his having been ‘the first one here,’” reports a detective. “Finally, we paced off the distances and found that even by running, the lad could not have arrived so early unless he had gone to bed dressed and ready. He proved to be the ‘bug.’”

“I felt sat upon,” or “as if he thought I was no good,” “as if I had been caught with the goods on”—these, according to R. F. Richardson, are the most general descriptions of the rise of the anger which all too often shuts off the thought of consequences. Thus, for the safety of our spiritual “face” do we utilize an ancient tool that now finds comparatively little exercise in guarding the security of our physical flesh.

Whether the threat against the citadel of our thought about ourselves comes from hateful factors in our spiritual or in our physical surroundings, the effort toward preservation of our faith in ourselves is equally pronounced and equally automatic and inevitable. It is this effort that underlies the outrageous conversational goulash of blasphemy, sex-perversion, and filth which I have found so revolting in the “fo’castle” of the cattle-boat, the checker-chambers of the steel plant, or the mess-table of the strike-breaker. It is the soul’s effort to ward off the thrusts of manifestly bad conditions by wrapping its hurts in the imposing garments supposed to register acknowledged manliness—with the help of a smoke screen of God-and-man-insulting indifference—like the child’s tearful and

over-vehement. "I don't care if you *do* take my toys away! I don't *want* to play!" For tired men on the twelve-hour shifts, for instance, such language has the further advantage of laying a whip upon exhausted muscles by steam-heating their talk. Thus such workers first find profanity and filth a friendly oil for saving soul and body from the wear and tear of their "fell clutch of circumstance"; then, standards having been created, every loyal or ambitious member of the crowd is required either to hold his own or to go the others one better—if his courage and imagination can stand the pace!

"Drink was the badge of manhood. . . . So I drank with them, drink by drink, raw and straight, though the damned stuff couldn't compare with a stick of chewing taffy or a delectable 'Cannonball.'" So Jack London tells how the bottle is used by men who feel themselves cut off from the enjoyment of the hoped-for certainty of manliness in less delusive fields.

"You see, the drunker ye be"—so explained my hobo friend just in from one of the least improved of the Northwest's lumber-camps—"the less ye're a-mindin' of the flies and the bugs. And when ye sober up, ye're used to 'em!"

When sober, old Uncle Zeke knew that his best days were over—because the boss was constantly giving him easier, and therefore less important, jobs. But in the saloon, half-drunk, it was a delight to hear him boast of the wonderful days of his prowess as a "tongs-wrestler" in the steel plant. In his answer to my question he named the source of the thirst of millions:

"Oh, I just like to get drunk enough—well, enough to get the feelin' of me old job back, like, you know."

If no witness can be heard to utter, in the unmistakable voice of sober actuality, the longed-for confirmation and assurance against the noisy testimony of manifestly disgraceful surroundings or experience, then few of us but will crave, with all the intensity of our souls, the saving congratulations of the still, small voice of an inebriated fancy.

No, it is not enough to see in vice the overwhelming of the spirit's powers by the body's passions; rather does it repre-

sent the combination of them all in a final assault upon the weakest spot in the line that stands to restrict and circumscribe their normal outlet and satisfaction.

Vicious men have not lost their wish for worth: they are merely making a last desperate effort *to save it*. The result is known as vice or crime, because such victory at the weakest part of the line is always not only dangerous to others but sure to prove delusive and degrading for the victor. In such men the mainspring is not lacking: on the contrary, it may be too strong, and its owner willing to pay too great a price for its up-keep. The trouble is not with the mainspring but with its indispensable escapement. Listen to Mulvaney of "Soldiers Three":

"Me hide's wore off in patches; sinthry-go has disconcerted me, an' I'm a married man, tu. But I've had my day, I've had my day, an' nothin' can take away the taste av that! Oh, me time past, whin I put me fut through ivry livin' wan av the Tin Commandmints between revelly and lights out! . . . Ivry woman that was not a witch was worth the runnin' afther in those days, an' ivry man was my dearest frind or—I had stripped to him an' we knew which was the betther av the tu."

Whether rich or poor, sane or insane, sober or intoxicated, virtuous or vicious—to be a person is to wish for the same fundamental satisfaction—to count one among other persons—to *have life and have it more abundantly*.

The part our bodies play both in satisfying the hankerings of the spirit and in fashioning the feelings by which our spirits, from day to day and moment to moment, ceaselessly concern themselves to measure our worth as humans among humans—this is what we have somehow contrived largely to overlook. For in this constant reckoning of our value to others and ourselves, these feelings have no choice but to accept the testimony of muscle as well as mind, of sinew as well as spirit.

"Ninety-eight per cent of all the huge and costly strikes which we were called upon to settle finally simmered down to nothing but a difficulty between one foreman and one man," reports a member of the War Labor Board. From observation I would hazard that the majority of this

98 per cent occurred when one of the two persons was suffering from that "t. 'n't." of "tiredness and temper" which fairly yearns for the opportunity to explode. Such a let-go relieves that emotional pressure which follows when either the body's weariness or illness or the soul's "hurt that honor feels," brings about a lessening of the certainty of our self-worth, and so, automatically although unconsciously, calls out to our defense the reserves of increased sensitiveness.

Domestic felicity as well as industrial peace would undoubtedly increase if only it were some one's business to raise a red flag whenever one of any two of us is thus in the mood that itches to camouflage our doubt about ourselves by an impressive, and therefore reassuring, show of force against the slightest imaginable threat. Such a flag with its "Danger! High Explosive About!" would be far from enough when both of any two of us thus became "pressure-poisoned" at the same time; four would be better, for the danger has much more than doubled!

"The way to a man's heart is through his stomach"—thus women have for ages made a highly practical, though undoubtedly one-sided, improvement upon the theologians who have pictured soul and body as a sort of innocent canary and hungry cat perpetually eying each other through the bars of self-control.

"The war-brides, brought back from 'the tight little isle' by our soldier-boys," so a writer counsels, "will do well to remember that unless care is taken love will fly out of the window when English cooking comes in at the door."

"We made a huge mistake; we were not meant to marry," so I told my husband shortly after our marriage," reports a friend. "'No, my feelings have not been hurt,' I told him. 'In fact, I have never thought anything through so logically in all my life as during this night of wakefulness. The conclusion is inescapable; my bag is packed!'"

"Luckily, Dick had noticed the way our bodies are constantly walking into the very centre of our thinkings through our feelings. He saved the day—or rather all these past years—for both of us. He shook his finger at me with his, 'You know, Anne, I warned you at dinner last night not to eat that salad!'"

And we've been living happily ever after."

Perhaps the judges of the criminal as well as of the divorce courts might wisely warn us against such gastronomic dangers. Who has not encountered in these perplexing days more than a few salads that stop little short of murder!

Vast enough—and far-reaching—surely, is the open door of our feelings through which the hankerings, the poisons, and the appetites of our bodies join in with the hopes, the hurts, and the passions of our spirits in measuring the distances and directions we have travelled—or wish still to travel—from the hateful Nirvana of personal and social nothingness. But it is made still vaster by this far-reaching fact:

*The feelings which follow from this ceaseless compounding of our current sensation, sentiment, and sense affect our attitudes, and so our actions, less in accordance with time than with intensity.*

"Many 's the time I have seen a lion, trained by a whole life of careful handling," testifies an expert, "driven back to the jungle spirit—perhaps never to return—by so little as five minutes of cruel treatment."

"He luv'd him like a vera brither: they had been drunk for weeks taegither!" is the way Bobbie Burns seems to have observed how humans are bound to each other, not by the length of their acquaintance, but by the intensity of the emotions which they have lived through together. The writer of the paper-backed thriller has erred only in making too much use of the same phenomenon; too many pages are apt to cut across the years by explaining how:

"She never knew she loved him until he stood beside her at her father's open grave!"

"Funny"—so the doughboy back from France ruminates puzzledly—"how some officers would hardly so much as speak to us—until we got into a front-line barrage. A few hours of that—and, say! from that day to this they'd take their shirts off their backs for us—and we for them!"

Friends or enemies? Amalgamation with, and undying loyalty for, this group and "agin" that? The question is not decided according to the duration of superficial contact or identity of opinion

on non-essentials. It is a question of the success or failure with which we emerge from the supreme test of going through one of life's high moments in company with another. In the heat of the supreme emotion of those rare moments when our soul's worth is either mortally threatened or, perhaps, receiving its baptism in the sacred fire of exalted and unquestioned certainty—it is then that we forge the loyalties or the antipathies which bind our later interests, attitudes, and actions with unyielding hoops of steel. Such a heat may cause that sudden intensity of injured feeling which seeks immediate outlet and relief in the blow that delivers an undreamed-of force—and on the instant turns its deliverer into a murderer! Or it may cause that I-just-must-tell-someone feeling, which, if chronically unsatisfied, may spell suicide or other madness. It is a sad commentary, incidentally, on the present decline of the pastoral function of our city churches that our daily newspapers have to offer our pressure-troubled fellows the relief of a sympathetic ear in columns bearing, in certain cities, such titles as:

"Tell it to Mrs. Maxwell" or "Cry on Gwendolyn's Shoulder"!

Needless to say, it is exactly the pressure heat of such high moments that serves to fuse the normal peace-time multitude of conflicting view-points into the unity of fighting patriotism which supplies those super-energies for repelling to the uttermost the mortal assault upon the nation's life. It is by means of this same heat, also, that every conflict in industry serves to bind together the members of the threatened group with the cement of such a near-fanatic zeal as may defy all efforts at reasonable discussion for years to come.

"Something has made these machinist fellows feel that they aren't measuring up—aren't holding up their end—as well as before. I wonder what it is?" Surely the hurrying "super" could wisely ruminate on this—and that without troubling himself with the "repressions," "complexes," "sublimates," etc., of the psychoanalyst, seeing that his group of tool-makers is too numerous, and so too normal, to call for the alienist or the interpreter of dreams, however helpful these

might be in the case of separate individuals. Even as it is, the super's rumination is not simple. For the pressure of machinist dissatisfaction which seeks outlet and relief through revolt is certain to be the result of some measurement unconsciously reckoned not only amid the infinitely intricate, unstable, and dangerous delicacies and sensitivenesses described, but reckoned also upon the basis of such a "relativity" as would perplex an Einstein!

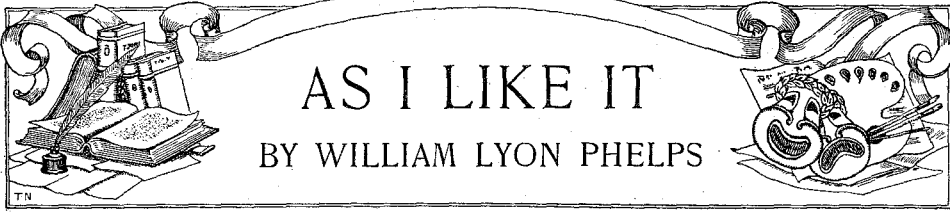
Of this last, more next month. Meanwhile, it is obvious that we cannot hope to know the underlying reasonableness—the true humanness—of our neighbor's action until we know the thought behind it. That thought behind it, in turn, remains beyond our ken until we know its genealogy—the directing wish which, according to the proverb, is its father, and the surrounding spiritual and physical environment which, through its restrictions and releases as discovered by the feelings, comes quite as truly to be its mother.

"In five years of bein' a machinist, I have almost never had as dirty a face as *you* have every day!" Thus a railway mechanic administered to me a well-deserved rebuke. I had made the mistake of assuming that work which necessitated an extremely dirty pair of hands thereby rendered inescapable a dirty face.

To-day great numbers of our friends have become convinced—and depressed because convinced—that a permanently and hopelessly dirty and degraded face must be accepted by modern society unless somehow men can be brought out of the greasy shops or the grimy mines, or perhaps be relieved of their tiny fraction of an infinitely subdivided factory process, and endowed with the supposed nobility of the ancient craftsman—if not, indeed, given the luxurious dignity of complete white-handed leisure as administrators of a socialist or communist state which knows not tears because it knows not gold.

Are these the inevitable alternatives? Before we decide let us see how the master wish for worth of our thesis jibes or fails to jibe with the master necessity of work of these modern times, and so accounts or fails to account for the war or the peace of twentieth-century industry—in next month's *MAGAZINE*.





IT seems strange to me that among the "reforms" which have been suggested in modern education during the last forty years, no one has ventured to attack the study of mathematics. It is always assumed by the ignorant, that Latin and Greek are useless studies, and that mathematics are valuable and practical. The truth is, that for every occupation except one for which higher mathematics are a prerequisite, like civil engineering, Greek and Latin are more useful. For the preacher, the lawyer, the doctor, the journalist, and for nearly all business men, the classics are more important than mathematics. Training in these ancient languages, with the accompanying culture and history, with the aid given to the meaning of English words and to the mastery of English style and expression—where does the binomial theorem stand in comparison?

That a sound education in Latin and Greek is of value in public life may be observed by regarding the leading English statesmen of to-day and of the immediate past. Did these studies unfit men like Gladstone, Balfour, and Lord Morley for practical affairs?

I believe in the equal dignity of all subjects of learning. But it seems absurd for a university to require neither Latin nor Greek for a Bachelor of Arts degree, and yet insist on the higher mathematics. I would at least allow every student a free choice as between classics and mathematics. And if I were a pupil, I should not hesitate a moment.

I have no doubt that for those who have a natural aptitude for the study, mathematics are valuable as intellectual discipline and training, whether one will use them definitely or not. They are particularly valuable for novelists and playwrights. But for those who have no gift and no inclination, mathematics are often worse than useless—they are a positive injury. Because I was forced to do so, I

studied mathematics faithfully and conscientiously from the age of three to the age of twenty-one; that is, from the time I first went to school until the end of my junior year in college. After long division, it is my conviction that nearly every hour spent on the subject was thrown away. It was worse than thrown away; the time would have been better employed in manual labor, in outdoor exercise, or in sleep. Mathematics were a constant discouragement and heart-break; the harder I worked, the less result I obtained. How bitterly I regret those hours and days and weeks and months and years, which might have been so much more profitably employed on studies, that would have stimulated my mind instead of stupefying it!

I was always an ambitious student, and wished to excel; therefore it was necessary for me to put more time on mathematics than on any other course. Even so, my grade in mathematics was never high, and I could not possibly have been graduated from Yale were it not that in other subjects I stood so well that my failures in mathematical examinations were treated with leniency.

Which fact leads me to state that scores of fairly intelligent American boys have been deprived of the advantages of a college education because of their inability to attain a passing grade in mathematics. They have been sacrificed year after year to this Moloch—is it worth while?

I am aware that Henry Adams, in his autobiography, regretted that he had not received more instruction in higher mathematics. But surely his view of life was pessimistic enough without that.

Let me repeat. I am not saying for every one this study is fruitless or harmful. I make only two points. First, that for the average man or woman, the classics are more valuable than mathematics; second, that in a liberal college course,