

THE SELF

You Have to Live With

by WINFRED RHOADES

WHEN SCIENTIFIC thought and method were yet in their incipiency, a man could believe that "lice, swallowed alive, are a sure cure for the yellow jaundice" or that there exists in the brain of a fresh-water perch a stone which is "very medicinal against the stone in the reins" — such things a man could believe and not suffer any serious mental or emotional consequence. Misconception, warped judgment, credulousness, self-deception, quirks, whims, crotchets — things of that sort, in matters scientific, may be entirely compatible with a calm and mellow disposition and a decently good and sane sort of life. But when misconception, warped judgment, and all the rest exist because one has refused to accept manifest facts and has even refused to look for them, the result may be very serious indeed. It may be serious not only in its effect on one's worldly condition but also in its effect on the health of one's mind and body, on one's happiness, on one's whole adventure in life.

Jack Rollop, for example. Never, in all his more than a half-century of years, has he acquired the habit of looking life straight in the face and seeing it in the clear, sharp light of actuality. Facts have been to him things not quite facts. He has not even developed the habit of asking what *are* the facts, a good deal of the time. He has dodged evidence. He has fooled himself. He has kept his mind in a realm of unreality. Things as they are he hasn't liked: therefore he has made a practice of living as if things are not as they are. He wanted this, that, or the other and he did his best to get what he wanted. He thereby kept himself harassed by debt. If he wasn't in debt to someone else, he was in debt to himself. Next month's stipend was spent before it was received. If someone tried to put him even with the world once more, he took pains to be un-

even again in a short while. He suffers now from the result. Suffers not alone because of these problems but also, more seriously, by reason of the self that has developed and that has to be lived with day after dreary day. His once merry and lighthearted personality has become a house of gloom.

Irene Wytham's difficulties with her "self" have taken a different course, but the result is also saddening. Still less than 30, full of loveliness and charm, already she is suffering from an inner life that tortures her. She tells of moods of extreme depression, and how they are increasing. Repeatedly in any conversation she reverts to the word *bitterness*. When the girls of her set were going to college, she was obliged to surrender her own hopes and take a job. She then felt inferior to her friends and resented her lot. A brief, unhappy marriage upset her young life still further and stirred up more resentment and bitterness. A later marriage, though satisfactory in love and respect and companionship, has led to a renewal of financial difficulties and forced her to take a job once more, and again envy and bitterness are rampaging within her: envy and bitterness because she has to work when her friends do not, because they can have and do things that are impossible for her, because they have children and she, who tremendously wants them, cannot. She confesses her cynicism. The enthusiasms she once had now are gone; she has "lost my optimism"; she "can't seem to feel hopeful"; and she is so hurt, so disappointed with what life has brought that she deliberately tries to hurt other people.

Bitterness is not a nice word for a young woman to use with regard to her feelings. If Irene Wytham's inner self tortures her now at the beginning of her days, it is easy to guess what it may do in after years, unless she



definitely and deliberately sets to work to construct a new and better self and does so at once. Envy and jealousy and bitterness are bad materials to put into a self that is in process of construction.

Every resentment that is encouraged, every bitter mood that is welcomed, every grudge, every animosity, every rebellion against life, every despondency, every smug conceit, every unjust self-depreciation — and on the other hand every self-mastery, every high fortitude, every facing of naked truth, every ringing faith, every beckoning ideal, every splendid courage — each one of these makes either for the breaking down of the ultimate self or else for its building up. Each one helps to make the self that must be lived with every hour of every day, through thick and thin, when you are twenty and 50 and 90.

II

WHAT IS life's supreme adventure and greatest achievement? Life's supreme adventure is the adventure of living. Life's greatest

achievement is learning how to live, the continual remaking of yourself so that at last you do know how to live. "Ye must be born anew" is true in a modern and psychological sense no less than in the usual theological employment. Every one of us needs re-education after years have been spent at school and college getting what was glamorously called an education. We need re-education because of the misstatements and sophistries that we swallowed as ineluctable facts. We need it far, far more because of the bad thinking habits we have acquired, the mischievous emotional reactions and ideals and pleasures we have learned to love.

The psychological mechanists would have us believe that a man's *is-ness* is no more than the result of insentient chemical processes in his physical constitution. We are not self-determined. What we think of as volition are merely automatic reactions to stimuli. We do not choose between This and That. We only fancy that we do so. All is predetermined by some chemical mechanism. The body is the actor. The mind is merely its effect.

THE SELF YOU HAVE TO LIVE WITH

You read such things and a What's-the-use? mood comes over you. Then straightway your thought flies to the effulgent pages of history and biography, whose splendor is made by the stories of men and women, great souls, who took with high heart this job of living in a difficult world and set out to make the spirit supreme as actor and the antagonistic body its subservient instrument. They were sure they did so. The world has been sure of it too. Some great new thought came, some new and splendid emotion, and the characters and personality responded to the challenge and changed radically.

The chemical transactions are not to be denied. They are there and they affect the personality. But they do not work alone.

Said Epictetus:

In every feast remember that there are two guests to be entertained, the body and the soul; and that what you give the body you presently lose, but what you give the soul remains for ever.

It is one of the world's very great treasures, that story of Epictetus. An ex-slave, lame, utterly poor in the things that make life comfortable, he asserted the power of mind and spirit over body, made himself one of the royal souls of all time, and gave to the world thoughts by which willing men and women have made themselves more truly masters of life. Then how about you and me? Can we not, in this advanced time, lift ourselves as high as the pagan philosopher of 2,000 years ago?

Consider these other vibrant words of his:

Let others study causes, problems, and syllogisms. Do you study death, chains, torture, exile: and all these with courage, and reliance upon him who hath called you to them, and judged you worthy a post in which you may show what the rational governing faculty can do when set in array against powers independent on the choice.

Great words, those! To show yourself worthy of your post: that is life's high call.

Then this from a modern soldier of suffering — the letter written by Robert Louis Stevenson after one of those bouts with disease when it was "a toss-up for life or death." He tells graphically of the struggle. Then he goes on:

Yet I did not wish to die either. I felt all the time that I had done nothing to entitle me to an honorable discharge; that I had taken up many obligations and begun many friendships which I had no right to put away from me; and that for me to die was to play the cur and shirking sybarite, and desert the colors on the eve of the decisive fight.

Stevenson's gallant words are typical of great souls throughout history. When Helen Keller (I believe it was she) said that "although the world is very full of suffering it is also full of the overcoming of it," she was talking quite in Stevenson's vein and lifting up herself to the same high kind of achievement: she was not only giving to the world a word of inspiration but was also putting one more sturdy timber into a structure of inner being with which she herself could live happily and fruitfully.

When Sir Walter Scott's amanuensis reported that the dictation of some of the best jokes put into the mouths of certain of his characters was "mingled with groans extorted from him by pains" and that when begged to interrupt his labors his only answer was a request to make sure that the doors were carefully shut "so that the expressions of his agony might not reach his family," he revealed a similar triumphant action of the spirit. Scott was already living out the idea that Stevenson was later to put into one of his vivid phrases: the idea that "true health is to be able to do without it."

There are the ringing words of Henry Fawcett, who gave to the world the parcel-post idea. Do you know those words? Only 24, working intensely for his degree at the university, his ambition already set for a parliamentary career, both eyeballs were pierced by shot from his father's gun on the hunting field, and in an instant he was made blind for life. It was a terrible blow and would have shattered life for some; but he said later that in ten minutes he had made up his mind: he would be treated as an equal!

What would he do in order to be treated as an equal? He would continue his studies and not give up his parliamentary career. He would engage still in strenuous outdoor sports. He would skate — sometimes as much as 50 or 60 miles a day. He would get into his boat on the Thames and row the long pull from Oxford to London. He would climb mountains and enjoy the view besides. He would ride his horse at such headlong pace that companions were put to it to keep up with him. He would continue to go a-fishing and still cast a fly with accuracy.

And he did these things! By the time he was 30 he was such an authority on political

THE FORUM

economy that he was given a chair at his own university of Cambridge. Two years later he succeeded, after a third effort, in reaching the House of Commons. In Parliament he made himself the special advocate of the laboring man and the poor and devoted himself with such concern to the voiceless, far-off people of the East that he was affectionately dubbed the "Member for India." And finally, because his blindness necessarily shut him out from the privities of the cabinet, he was made Postmaster General. Will anyone deny that he lived up to his vow to be treated as an equal? But that was not all. He created a "self" with which he could live with equanimity.

There is Dr. Trudeau and his great word, *acquiescence*. Do you know that passage in the autobiography?

It took me a long time to learn, imperfectly though it be, that acquiescence is the only way for the tuberculosis invalid to conquer fate. To cease to rebel and struggle, and to learn to be content with part of a loaf when one can not have a whole loaf, though a hard lesson to learn, is good philosophy for the tuberculous invalid, and to his astonishment he often finds that what he considers the half-loaf, when acquiesced in, proves most satisfying.

He too was young when the break with normal life was forced on him: only 25 when the Adirondacks became his forlorn hope. His brilliant prospects in New York, his bride of a year and a half, the hopes on which for years he had fed his spirit — all had to be abandoned; and as he made the long, hard journey he saw only death before him. Death finally delayed its coming; but all that Dr. Trudeau accomplished had to be done as a sick man, and the last five years of his life had to be spent in his room and much of the time in bed. But by acquiescing in his fate and then making the most of his half-loaf he turned himself into one of the world's great citizens and one of the notable benefactors of suffering humanity.

These are people whose names are known to the world. But in dark little tenements, on hardscrabble farms, in plodding offices, on city streets doing queer odd jobs, and among people whose lives have been turned topsy-turvy by adverse fortune you can find their worthy mates.

Sometimes I think that I am glad that I have had my trials and change in method of living for I have gained in peace of mind, understanding and tolerance of others.

So said the writer of a letter which came to my hand a short time ago. Brought up in luxury, with servants and a saddle horse, that woman now has sometimes to be supplied even with carfare to visit a public clinic. But she is learning that the self one develops inwardly is of greater importance for the living of a happy life than the fortune one has outwardly. She is learning that it is the self one builds up that makes or unmakes one's world and determines whether one shall live in serenity or in gloom and to a great extent determines also the state of one's health.

III

IF A PHYSICIAN succeeds in curing a high blood pressure or arthritic hands, he has of course done something. But he has not done enough if he lets his patient go out into life still enslaved by an unhealthy emotional habit or with his mental processes so twisted that he cannot deal with the problems of daily life in hopeful fashion. Mental self-command, the habit of constructive thought direction — these things are more important, for the happiness and wholesomeness of life, than physical soundness.

What is called nervousness is apt to be a state of mind. In that case it can be mastered by the cultivation of new and better thought habits and emotion habits, just as Epictetus and Sir Walter Scott and Stevenson and Henry Fawcett and Dr. Trudeau and others of the great host of spiritual victors in life made themselves by force of mind and spirit rise superior to the difficulties that struck at them and threatened to wreck their lives.

The point that this brings up is a point about the quality of thought. When you go to a shop to make some purchase, you want to know whether the dress material is of a quality that will wear well, whether the tinned food is of good quality, whether the engine of the car is of a quality that will stand up to the strain to which it will be subjected. These things you give thought to, if you are spending money.

How often do you ask yourself about the quality of your thoughts? Are they of a quality that will mix well with the facts of life? What results will they produce when you run up against the ideas and moods and dispositions and personalities of the people you have to mingle with? What effect will they have when

THE SELF YOU HAVE TO LIVE WITH

you must look the grim needs of your own life straight in the face? Will they tend to bring your life to failure or success? Will they make you weaker or stronger for the long-drawn-out struggle? Do they make for sickness or for health? Are they of the kind that tears down or of the kind that builds up? Will they make you, in the long run, a failure or a hero, a victim of life or a master in life?

And the emotional energy with which your thoughts are linked up and empowered: is it of the kind that leads to a havoc of the self or is it creative in its tendency? Does it exhaust itself in mere sentimental enjoyment of a feeling or does it drive you on to action that is courageous and aspiring and that will keep you game to the last?

The drifter lets himself think any old thought that burns up in his head and yields himself to any emotion that comes along. The man who is set for the building up of a self that he can live with in some kind of comfort and with hope of continued improvement chooses deliberately what he will let himself think and what kind of feeling he will feel. He decides that he will not permit himself to dwell on resentments, animosities, criticisms, disgusts, disappointments, thwartings, aches, pains, and miseries in general but that he will give himself over to big thoughts, thoughts that amplify and enrich the personality. He chooses and cultivates emancipating emotions and rejects those that turn the inner life into a bedlam torment. Thoughts of appreciation and high desire, stouthearted and strengthening emotions: it is by these that we are made to grow into larger and braver life, truer sanity, and more harmonious inner being.

IV

HERE IS a parcel of ground. It is not precisely the same today as it was yesterday. It is by no means the same as it was when you bought it 25 years ago. Every drop of rain that has fallen, every wind that has blown, every bit of sunshine that has penetrated it and also every bit of frost, every foot that has trodden it, every worm that has burrowed into it, every bit of work you have done upon it, every seed that has fallen into it, every crop that has been grown, every crop that has *not* been grown — everything that has happened to it has left a mark of some kind. That mark

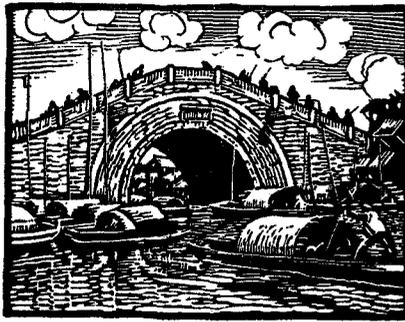
was either for its enriching and beautifying or for its impoverishment and disfigurement.

So is it with the self. A self is not something you are endowed with at birth, as you are endowed with legs or lungs or liver or heart. It is something you are continually creating for yourself as you live your day-by-day life. Whether that self shall be sapless or filled with vigor, barren or goodly, a source of misery or a source of power — that depends on the interests you cultivate, the thoughts you permit, the ideas and ideals you reach out after, the reactions you let yourself enjoy and encourage.

Here is one final illustration. The woman who put the name "Michael Fairless" on the title page of *The Roadmender* gave to the world some pages of inspiration. But the self that she was indefatigably busy growing until the very day of her death was greater and finer than any book she could write. When she refused to let her spirit yield to sickness, disappointment, and frustration heaped on frustration, when, defeated and driven back in one direction, she sturdily set out again and again to make good in some other direction, when almost up to the day of her passing she labored at her pages of proof in order to make her last little piece of work as nearly perfect as it could be made, correcting and polishing with meticulous care when not able of herself to read a word or lift a pencil — when she did that she gave to the world her greater and more important contribution.

The person who wants for his inner companion a self that has poise and strength and loveliness and adventurous aspiration teaches himself the habit of communing with bigness and calmness and strength. He keeps under his hand some book that stimulates the mind and soul to greatness and feeds himself on it daily. He takes pains to put himself in the way of emotions that are liberating and heartening and invites them to take up their abode within him. He cultivates strong desire for essential bigness of the inner man and makes that desire for bigness of spirit the passion of his life. He teaches himself to live his daily life in companionship with the spirit of truth and seeks continually to be led into more of the truth. He makes growth and ever more growth the desire of his heart. He unites himself with the everlasting soul of the universe and with that soul he goes his onward way.

China Unconquerable



by MADAME SUN YAT-SEN

HUNDREDS of books and thousands of articles have been written on the subject of the Sino-Japanese conflict. But it seems to me that most of the authors overestimate the Japanese strength and underestimate the Chinese power of resistance. And, if one examines the policy of the Chinese Government during the past ten years, that impression will be strengthened. Concession after concession has been made to the Japanese. It was only necessary for Japan to make some new bluff, and her aim was achieved. Japan had only to threaten the Chinese by landing some troops and a handful of airplanes, and immediately the Chinese Government made new concessions.

The unfortunate policy of the Nanking government, which followed the course of internal pacification before resistance of external aggression, has even more played into the hands of the Japanese militarists. But during the past year the situation has changed. The anti-Japanese movement of the people reached a high level, and it became no longer possible for the Japanese to obtain their aims by threats and bluffs. The Chinese people have realized that it is possible for them to resist. They are no longer afraid of their "friendly neighbor."

Mass opinion has made itself felt in China. In the growing demand of the people for resistance to the Japanese, all political differences have become of secondary importance. Military satrapy has given way to the rise of an intense patriotism, which gives hope for a genuine unification of the country.

From my viewpoint, the most important task before China is the realization of Dr. Sun Yat-sen's principle of democracy. To guide us in the Chinese revolution, Sun Yat-sen gave us three principles — democracy, nationalism,

and the people's livelihood — and three policies, which are the instruments by which these principles can be achieved. The democratic nations have witnessed how neglect of the first principle during the past ten years has brought great calamity to China. There have been endless civil warfares; the country has been devastated; millions of our people have perished and millions more been rendered destitute and desperate. The best minds of China have always demanded the cessation of civil warfare and conciliation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Long ago public opinion condemned the insidious belief that before resisting Japan we must first crush the communists. Naturally, this policy was provoked by Japan.

As a result of ten years of internal warfare, many parts of the country have been ravaged. And, far from being defeated, the communists have become the advance guard of the anti-Japanese resistance. From the articles of Edgar Snow, correspondent of the *London Daily Herald*, who recently visited the Red regions, we know the actual conditions there and realize what a lot of nonsense and false propaganda were written by persons who had never ventured within speaking distance of the "out-law." In fact, it is quite probable that most of this propaganda originated with Japan.

It is a matter of congratulation that General Chiang Kai-Shek has stopped further civil warfare and that the Kuomintang at last, in a recent plenary session, discussed the question of reconciliation with the Communist Party. But it is very regrettable that, in the manifesto of this plenary session, conditions for conciliation with the Communist Party have been laid down which will make a ready compromise