

Analyzing Character

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ANALYZING CHARACTER

The New Science of Judging Men; Misfits in Business, the Home and Social Life

BY

KATHERINE M. H. BLACKFORD, M.D. AND ARTHUR NEWCOMB

1922

CONTENTS

PAGE INTRODUCTION 1

PART ONE--ANALYZING CHARACTER IN VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

CHAP.

I--CAUSES OF MISFITS 17 II--ELEMENTS OF FITNESS 39 III--CLASSES OF MISFITS 73 IV--THE PHYSICALLY FRAIL 111 V--THE FAT MAN 137 VI--THE MAN OF BONE AND MUSCLE 157 VII--SLAVES OF MACHINERY 169 VIII--THE IMPRACTICAL MAN 191 IX--HUNGRY FOR FAME 223 X--WASTE OF TALENT IN THE PROFESSIONS 241 XI--WOMEN'S WORK 261 XII--SPECIAL FORMS OF UNFITNESS 267

PART TWO--ANALYZING CHARACTER IN SELECTION OF EMPLOYEES

I--THE COST OF UNSCIENTIFIC SELECTION 291 II--THE SELECTION OF EXECUTIVES 303
 III--THE REMEDY 331 IV--RESULTS OF SCIENTIFIC EMPLOYMENT 345 V--IDEAL EMPLOYMENT
 CONDITIONS 359

PART THREE--ANALYZING CHARACTER IN PERSUASION

I--THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSUASION 367 II--SECURING FAVORABLE ATTENTION 383
 III--AROUSING INTEREST AND CREATING DESIRE 391 IV--INDUCING DECISION AND ACTION
 401 V--EFFICIENT AND SATISFACTORY SERVICE 413

PART FOUR--PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF CHARACTER ANALYSIS

I--THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS OF CHARACTER ANALYSIS 429 II--HOW TO LEARN AND APPLY THE
 SCIENCE OF CHARACTER ANALYSIS 443 III--USES OF CHARACTER ANALYSIS 453

APPENDIX

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PRINCIPAL VOCATIONS 465

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG. PAGE

1. Jacob A Riis 53 2. Dr. Booker T. Washington 54 3. James H. Collins 55 4. H.G. Wells 56 5. Henry Ford 57
 6. Hugo de Vries 58 7. Dr. Henry Van Dyke 59 8. Dr. Beverly T. Galloway 60 9. Richard Mansfield 125 10.
 Hon. A.L. Cutting (front) 126 11. Hon. A.L. Cutting (profile) 127 12. Chief Justice Melville Fuller 128 13.
 Frank A. Vanderlip 129 14. Hon. Joseph P. Folk 130 15. Hon. Nelson W. Aldrich 131 16. Well-Developed
 Base of Brain 132 17. Beaumont, Aviator 149 18. Lincoln Beachey 150 19. Col. George W. Goethals 151 20.
 Field Marshal von Hindenberg 152 21. Rear Admiral Frank E. Beatty 153 22. William Lloyd Garrison 154 23.
 Samuel Rea 155 24. Lon Wescott Beck 156 25. "Sydney Williams" (front) 197 26. "Sydney Williams"
 (profile) 198 27. Prof. Adolph von Menzel 199 28. Edgar Allan Poe 200 29. Samuel Taylor Coleridge 201 30.
 Thomas De Quincy 202 31. O. Henry at 30 203 32. Edwin Reynolds 204 33. John Masefield 229 34. Edward
 De Reszke 230 35. Puccini, Composer 231 36. John S. Sargent, R.A. 232 37. Pietro Mascagni 233 38. Richard
 Burton 234 39. Mendelssohn, Composer 235 40. Massenet, Composer 236 41. Hon. Elihu Root (Front) 253
 42. Rev. Henry Ward Beecher 254 43. Rufus Isaacs, Baron Reading 255 44. Hon. Elihu Root (Profile) 256 45.
 Harland B. Howe 257 46. Justice Horace H. Lurton 258 47. Prof. William H. Burr 259 48. Hon. John Wesley
 Gaines 260 49. Hon. Joseph Walker 277 50. Hon. Lon V. Stephens 278 51. Hon. Oscar Underwood 279 52.
 Hon. Victor Murdock 280 53. Robert C. Ogden 281 54. Prof. P.G. Holden 282 55. W. Nelson Edelsten 283
 56. Dr. Beverly T. Galloway (Profile) 284 57. Conical Hands 317 58. Hands of Mrs. Flora E. Durand 317 59.
 Hands of Financier and Administrator 318 60. Hands of Engineer and Expert Mechanic 318 61. Long Fingers
 318 62. Narrow Head 319 63. Sir Henry Fowler 320 64. Reginald D. Barry 321 65. Large Dome Above
 Temples 322 66. Dr. V. Stefansson 323 67. Square Head 324 68. Round Head 324

PREFACE

This work is a treatise upon the fascinating and valuable art of analyzing human character. It makes no attempt to teach, as such, the technical principles upon which this art is based. It is, rather, an attempt to familiarize the reader with the most important of these by the inductive method--by means of incidents and descriptions from our records and from the biographies of well-known men. Some effort has been made, also, to give the reader the benefit of the authors' experience and observation in vocational counsel, employment, and salesmanship.

In the preparation of this work, we have drawn copiously from our records of individuals and firms. It should be borne in mind by the reader that, for obvious reasons--except in one or two cases--the details of these narratives have been so altered as to disguise the personalities and enterprises involved, the essentials being maintained true to the record.

New York City, January 3, 1916. THE AUTHORS.

INTRODUCTION

"There is one name," says Elbert Hubbard, "that stands out in history like a beacon light after all these twenty-five hundred years have passed, just because the man had the sublime genius of discovering ability. That man is Pericles. Pericles made Athens and to-day the very dust of the street of Athens is being sifted and searched for relics and remnants of the things made by people who were captained by men of ability who were discovered by Pericles."

The remark of Andrew Carnegie that he won his success because he had the knack of picking the right men has become a classic in current speech. Augustus Caesar built up and extended the power of the Roman Empire because he knew men. The careers of Charlemagne, Napoleon, Disraeli, Washington, Lincoln, and all the empire builders and empire saviours hold their places in history because these men knew how to recognize, how to select, and how to develop to the highest degree the abilities of their co-workers. The great editors, Greeley, Dana, James Gordon Bennett, McClure, Gilder and Curtis, attained their high station in the world of letters largely because of their ability to unearth men of genius. Morgan, Rockefeller, Theodore N. Vail, James J. Hill, and other builders of industrial and commercial empires laid strong their foundations by almost infallible wisdom in the selection of lieutenants. Even in the world of sports the names of Connie Mack, McGraw, Chance, Moran, Carrigan and Stallings shine chiefly because of their keen judgment of human nature.

If the glory that was Greece shone forth because Pericles kindled its flame, then Pericles in any time and amongst any people would probably have ushered in a Golden Age. Had Carnegie lived in any other day and sought his industrial giants, he would no doubt have found them. If a supreme judge of latent talent and inspirer of high achievement can thus always find material ready to his hand, it follows that humanity is rich in undiscovered genius--that, in the race, there are, unguessed and undeveloped, possibilities for a millennium of Golden Ages. Psychologists tell us that only a very small percentage of the real ability and energy of the average man is ever developed or used.

"Poor man!" says a reviewer, speaking of a contemporary, "he never discovered his discoverer." The man who waits for his Pericles usually waits in vain. There has been only one Pericles in all history. Great geniuses in the discovery, development, and management of men are rare. Most men never meet them. And yet every man can discover his discoverer.

Self-knowledge is the first step to self-development. Through an understanding of his own aptitudes and talents one may find fullest expression for the highest possibilities of his intellect and spirit. A man who thus knows himself needs no other discoverer. The key to self-knowledge is intelligent, scientific self-study.

In the year 1792, Mahmoud Effendi, a Turkish archer, hit a mark with an arrow at 482 yards. His bow, arrows, thumb-ring and groove are still on exhibition in London as proof of the feat. His prowess lay in his native gift, trained by years of practice, to guess the power of his bow, the weight and balance of his arrow, and the range and direction of his target; also, the sweep of the wind. This he gained by observations repeated until the information gathered from them amounted to almost exact knowledge. Thousands of gunners to-day hit a mark miles away, with a 16-inch gun, not because they are good guessers, but because, by means of science, they determine accurately all of the factors entering into the flight of their projectiles. Pericles judged men by a shrewd guess--the kind of guess called intuition. But such intuition is only a native gift of keen observation,

backed by good judgment, and trained by shrewd study of large numbers of men until it becomes instinctively accurate.

In modern times we are learning not to depend upon mere guesses--no matter how shrewd. Mahmoud Effendi could not pass on to others the art he had acquired. But the science of gunnery can be taught to any man of average intelligence and natural aptitudes. Pericles left posterity not one hint about how to judge men--how to recognize ability. Humanity needs a scientific method of judging men, so that any man of intelligence can discover genius--or just native ability--in himself and others.

As the result of our ignorance, great possibilities lie undeveloped in nearly all men. Self-expression is smothered in uncongenial toil. Parents and teachers, groping in the dark, have long been training natural-born artists to become mechanics, natural-born business men to become musicians, and boys and girls with great aptitudes for agriculture and horticulture to become college professors, lawyers, and doctors. Splendid human talent, amounting in some cases to positive genius, is worse than wasted as a result.

In our experience, covering years of careful investigation and the examination of many thousands of individuals, we have seen so much of the tragedy of the misfit that it seems at times almost universal. The records of one thousand persons taken at random from our files show that 763, or 76.3 per cent, felt that they were in the wrong vocations. Of these 414 were thirty-five years old or older. Most of these, when questioned as to why they had entered upon vocations for which they had so little natural aptitude, stated that they had either drifted along lines of least resistance or had been badly advised by parents, teachers, or employers.

We knew a wealthy father, deaf to all pleas from his children, who spent thousands of dollars upon what he thought was a musical education for his daughter, including several years in Europe. The young lady could not become a musician. The aptitude for music was not in her. But she was unusually talented in mathematics and appreciation of financial values, and could have made a marked success had she been permitted to gratify her constantly reiterated desire for a commercial career. This same father, with the same obstinacy, insisted that his son go into business. The young man was so passionately determined to make a career of music that he was a complete failure in business and finally embezzled several thousand dollars from his employer in the hope of making his escape to Europe and securing a musical education. Here were two human lives of marked talent as completely ruined and wasted as a well-intentioned but ignorant and obstinate parent could accomplish that end.

A few years ago a young man was brought to us by his friends for advice. He had been educated for the law and then inherited from his father a considerable sum of money. Having no taste for the law and a repugnance for anything like office work, he had never even attempted to begin practice. Having nothing to do, he was becoming more and more dissipated, and when we saw him first had lost confidence in himself and was utterly discouraged. "I am useless in the world," he told us. "There is nothing I can do." At our suggestion, he was finally encouraged to purchase land and begin the scientific study and practice of horticulture. The last time we saw him he was erect, ruddy, hard-muscled, and capable looking. Best of all, his old, petulant, dissatisfied expression was gone. In its place was the light of worthy achievement, success, and happiness. He told us there were no finer fruit trees anywhere than his. Such incidents as this are not rare--indeed, they are commonplace. We could recount them from our records in great number. But every observant reader can supply many from his own experience.

Thousands of young men and women are encouraged, every year, to enroll in schools where they will spend time and money preparing themselves for professions already overcrowded and for which a large majority of them have no natural aptitudes. A prominent physician tells us that of the forty-eight who were graduated from medical school with him, he considers only three safe to consult upon medical subjects. Indeed, so great is the need and so increasingly serious is it becoming, as our industrial and commercial life grows more complex and the demand for conservation and efficiency more exacting, that progressive men and women in our universities and schools and elsewhere have undertaken a study of the vocational problem and are

earnestly working toward a solution of it in vocational bureaus, vocational schools, and other ways, all together comprising the vocational movement.

Roger W. Babson, in his book, "The Future of the Working Classes: Economic Facts for Employers and Wage Earners," says: "The crowning work of an economic educational system will be vocational guidance. One of the greatest handicaps to all classes to-day is that 90 per cent of the people have entered their present employment blindly and by chance, irrespective of their fitness or opportunities. Of course, the law of supply and demand is continually correcting these errors, but this readjusting causes most of the world's disappointments and losses. Some day the schools of the nation will be organized into a great reporting bureau on employment opportunities and trade conditions, directing the youths of the nation--so far as their qualifications warrant--into lines of work which then offer the greatest opportunity. Only by such a system will each worker receive the greatest income possible for himself, and also the greatest benefits possible from the labors of all, thus continually increasing production and yet avoiding overproduction in any single line." That the main features of the system suggested by Mr. Babson are being made the basis of the vocational movement is one of the most hopeful signs of the times.

Dr. George W. Jacoby, the neurologist, says: "It is scarcely too much to say that the entire future happiness of a child depends upon the successful bringing out of its capabilities. For upon that rests the choice of its life work. A mistake in this choice destroys all the real joy of living--it almost means a lost life."

Consider the stone wall against which the misfit batters his head:

He uses only his second rate, his third rate, or even less effective mental and physical equipment. He is thus handicapped at the start in the race against those using their best. He is like an athlete with weak legs, but powerful arms and shoulders, trying to win a foot race instead of a hand-over-hand rope-climbing contest.

Worse than his ineptitude, however, is the waste and atrophy of his best powers through disuse. Thus the early settlers of the Coachella Valley fought hunger and thirst while rivers of water ran away a few feet below the surface of the richly fertile soil.

No wonder, then, that the misfit hates his work. And yet, his hate for it is the real tragedy of his life.

Industry, like health, is normal. All healthy children, even men, are active. Activity means growth and development. Inactivity means decay and death. The man who has no useful work to do sometimes expresses himself in wrong-doing and crime, for he has to do something industriously to live. Even our so-called "idle rich" and leisure classes are strenuously active in their attempts to amuse themselves.

When, therefore, a man hates his work, when he is dissatisfied and discontented in it, when his work arouses him to destructive thoughts and feelings, rather than constructive, there is something wrong, something abnormal, and the abnormality is his attempt to do work for which he is unfitted by natural aptitudes or by training.

The man who is trying to do work for which he is unfitted feels repressed, baffled and defeated. He may not even guess his unfitness, but he does feel its manifold effect. He lacks interest in his work and, therefore, that most vital factor in personal efficiency--incentive. He cannot throw himself into his work with a whole heart.

When Thomas A. Edison is bent upon realizing one of his ideas, his absorption in his work exemplifies Emerson's dictum: "Nothing great was ever accomplished without enthusiasm. The way of life is wonderful--it is by abandonment." He shuts himself away from all interruption in his laboratory; he works for hours oblivious of everything but his idea. Even the demands of his body for food and sleep do not rise above the threshold of consciousness.

Edison himself says that great achievement is a result, not of genius, but of this kind of concentration in work--and, until the mediocre man has worked as has Edison, he cannot prove the contrary. Mr. Edison has results to prove the value of his way of working. Even our most expert statisticians and mathematicians would find it difficult to calculate, accurately, the amount of material wealth this one worker has added to humanity's store. Of the unseen but higher values in culture, in knowledge, in the spread of civilization, and in greater joy of living for millions of people, there are even greater riches. Other men of the past and present, in every phase of activity, have demonstrated that such an utter abandonment to one's tasks is the keynote of efficiency and achievement. But such abandonment is impossible to the man who is doing work into which he cannot throw his best and greatest powers--which claims only his poorest and weakest.

This man's very failure to achieve increases his unrest and unhappiness. Walter Dill Scott, the psychologist, in his excellent book, "Increasing Human Efficiency in Business," gives loyalty and concentration as two of the important factors in human efficiency. But loyalty pre-supposes the giving of a man's best. Concentration demands interest and enthusiasm. These are products of a love of the work to be done.

The man employed at work for which he is unfit, therefore, finds it not a means of self-expression, but a slow form of self-destruction. All this wretchedness of spirit reacts directly upon the efficiency of the worker. "A successful day is likely to be a restful one," says Professor Scott,--"an unsuccessful day an exhausting one. The man who is greatly interested in his work and who finds delight in overcoming the difficulties of his calling is not likely to become so tired as the man for whom the work is a burden.

"Victory in intercollegiate athletic events depends on will power and physical endurance. This is particularly apparent in football. Frequently it is not the team with the greater muscular development or speed of foot that wins the victory, but the one with the more grit and perseverance. At the conclusion of a game players are often unable to walk from the field and need to be carried. Occasionally the winning team has actually worked the harder and received the more serious injuries. Regardless of this fact, it is usually true that the victorious team leaves the field less jaded than the conquered team. Furthermore, the winners will report next day refreshed and ready for further training, while the losers may require several days to overcome the shock and exhaustion of their defeat.

"Recently I had a very hard contest at tennis. Some hours after the game I was still too tired to do effective work. I wondered why, until I remembered that I had been thoroughly beaten, and that, too, by an opponent whom I felt I outclassed. I had been in the habit of playing even harder contests and ordinarily with no discomfort--especially when successful in winning the match.

"What I have found so apparent in physical exertion is equally true in intellectual labor. Writing or research work which progresses satisfactorily leaves me relatively fresh; unsuccessful efforts bring their aftermath of weariness.

"_Intellectual work which is pleasant is stimulating and does not fag one, while intellectual work which is uninteresting or displeasing is depressing and exhausting_....

"To restore muscular and nerve cells is a very delicate process. So wonderful is the human organism, however, that the process is carried on perfectly without our consciousness or volition except under abnormal conditions.

"Food and air are the first essentials of this restoration. In-directly the perfect working of all the bodily organs contributes to the process--especially deepened breathing, heightened pulse, and increase of bodily volume due to the expansion of the blood vessels running just beneath the skin.

"Here pleasure enters. Its effect on the expenditure of energy is to make muscle and brain cells more available for consumption, and particularly to hasten the process of restoration or recuperation.

"The deepened breathing supplies more air for the oxidation of body wastes. The heightened pulse carries nourishment more rapidly to the depleted tissues and relieves the tissues more rapidly from the poisonous wastes produced by work. The body, the machine, runs more smoothly, and few stops for repairs are made necessary.

"In addition to these specific functions, *pleasure hastens all the bodily processes which are of advantage to the organism*. The hastening may be so great that recuperation keeps pace with the consumption consequent on efficient labor, with the result that there is little or no exhaustion. This is, in physiological terms, the reason why a person can do more when he 'enjoys' his work or play, and can continue his efforts for a longer period without fatigue. The man who enjoys his work requires less time for recreation and exercise, for his enjoyment recharges the storage battery of energy."

But the misfit can take none of this pleasure in his work. He is unhappy because he cannot do his best; he is wretched because he feels that he is being defeated in the contest of life; he is miserable because he hates the things he has to do; he can take no satisfaction in his work because he feels that it is poorly done; and, finally, all of his joylessness reacts upon him, decreasing his efficiency and making him a more pitiable failure.

So this is the vicious circle:

Misfit; Inefficient; Unhappy; More inefficient.

Rather is it a descending spiral, leading down to poverty, disease, crime and death.

Now, consider the man who has found *his* work. To him the glorious abandonment which is the way to achievement is possible. Such a man does not merely exist--he lives, and lives grandly. His work gives him joy, both in its doing and in its results. It calls out and develops his highest and best talents. He therefore grows in power, in wisdom, in health, in efficiency, and in success. All his life runs in an ascending spiral. No task appalls him. No difficulty daunts him. He may work hard--terribly hard. He may tunnel through mountains of drudgery. He will shun the easy ways and leave the soft jobs to weaker men. But through it all there will be a song in his heart.

Work to such a man is as natural an expression as hunger, or love, or pleasure, or laughter. He returns to it with zest and eagerness. Such a man's work flows out from his soul. It is an expression of the divine in him.

The almost universal cry for leisure is due to the almost universal unfitness of men and women for their tasks. The wise man knows that there is no happiness in leisure. The only happiness is self-expression in useful work. And so we come again to the problem of fitting the man to his work. Every man is a bundle of possibilities. Every man has a right to usefulness, prosperity and happiness. These are possible only through knowledge of self, knowledge of others, knowledge of work, and the ability to make the right combination of self and others and work.

Man has learned much about the material universe. Nearly everything has been analyzed and classified. Man weighs, measures, tests, and in others ways scrupulously determines the fitness of every bit of material that goes into a machine before it is built. There are scientific ways of selecting cattle, horses, and even hogs for particular purposes. Purchasing departments of great commercial and industrial institutions maintain laboratories for the determination, with mathematical exactitude, of the qualifications and fitness to requirements of all kinds of materials, tools and equipment. And yet, when it comes to the choice of his own life work, the guidance of his children in their vocations, or the selection of employees and co-workers, the average man decides the entire matter by almost any other consideration than scientifically determined fitness. He takes counsel with personal prejudices, with customs and traditions, with pride, or with fear--or he leaves the decision to mere guess-work, or even chance.

It is time, therefore, that man should learn about himself and others, and especially about those things which are vital to even a moderate enjoyment of the good things of life.

Two diametrically opposite states of mind have been responsible for this lack of careful study of the aptitudes, characteristics, and qualifications of man and the ways of determining them in advance of actual performance. The first of these has been characterized by loose thinking, unscientific methods, arbitrary and complicated systems--- such as palmistry, astrology, physiognomy, phrenology, and others of the same ilk. In these systems, some truth, patiently learned by sincere and able workers, has been befogged and contaminated by hasty conclusions of the incompetent and clever lies of charlatans. Thus the whole subject has fallen into disrepute with intelligent people. Ever since the earliest days of recorded history there have been attempts at character reading. Many different avenues of approach to the subject have been opened; some by sincere and earnest men of scientific minds and scholarly attainments; some by sincere and earnest but unscientific laymen; and some by mountebanks and charlatans. As the result of all this study, research and empiricism, a great mass of alleged facts about physical characteristics has been accumulated. When we began our research seventeen years ago, we found a very considerable library covering every phase of character interpretation, both scientific and unscientific. A great deal has been added since that time. 'Much of this literature is pseudo-scientific, and some of it is pure quackery.

The second state of mind is a reaction from the first. Some men of science are timid about accepting or stating anything in regard to character analysis. They demand more than conclusive proof; what they insist upon is mathematical accuracy. Until a man can be analyzed in such a way as to leave nothing to common sense or good judgment, they hesitate to acknowledge that he can be analyzed at all. But in the very nature of the case, the science of character analysis cannot be a science in the same sense in which chemistry and mathematics are sciences. So far our studies and experiences do not lead us to expect that it ever can become absolute and exact. Human nature is complicated by too many variables and obscured by too much that is elusive and intangible. We cannot put a man on the scales and determine that he has so many milligrams of common sense, or apply the micrometer to him and say that he has so many millimetres of financial ability. Human traits and human values are relative and can be determined and stated only relatively. We shall, therefore, waste both time and human values if we wait until our knowledge is mathematically exact before we make it useful to ourselves and to others.

The sciences of medicine, agriculture, chemistry and physics are not yet exact. They are in a state of development. We have, however, the good sense to apply them so far as we know them, and to accept new discoveries, new methods, and new ways of applying them, as they come to us. And so, in the study of ourselves, let us throw aside traditions; let us forget the mountebanks and charlatans of the past; let us not wait for the final work of the mathematician; but, with plain common sense, let us apply such knowledge as we have at hand. This knowledge should be the result of careful observation, of a careful and prolonged study of all that science has discovered in regard to man, his origin, his development, his history, his body, and his mind. Every conclusion reached should be verified, not in hundreds, but in thousands of cases, before it is finally accepted.

The perfection of such a science requires the united efforts of many investigators, experimenters, and practical workers, such as teachers, employers, social workers, parents, and men and women everywhere, each in his own way and in the solution of his own problems. Were a uniform method adopted and made a part of the vocational work of our social settlements, our public schools, our colleges and universities, and other institutions, also by private individuals in selecting their own vocations; were uniform records to be made and every subject analyzed followed up, and his career studied, we should, in one generation, have data from which any intelligent, analytical mind could formulate a science of human analysis very nearly approaching exactitude.

As a result of the application of such a uniform method, the principles of human analysis would rapidly become a matter of common knowledge and could be taught in our schools just as we to-day teach the

principles of chemical, botanical, or zoological analysis. In the industries, the scientific selection, assignment and management of men have yielded increases in efficiency from one hundred to one thousand per cent. The majority of people that were dealt with were mature, with more or less fixity of character and habits. Many of them were handicapped by iron-clad limitations and restrictions in their affairs and in their environments. What results may be possible when these methods, improved and developed by a wider use, are applied to young people, with their plastic minds and wonderful latent possibilities, we cannot even venture to forecast.

While we are accustomed to thinking of unfitness for our tasks as the one form of maladjustment due to our ignorance of human nature in general and individual traits in particular, there are other forms which, in their own way, cause much trouble and the remedying of which leads to desirable results. These are many and varied, but may be grouped, perhaps, most conveniently under two or three general headings.

First, there is the relationship between employers and employees. The disturbances and inharmony which mark this relationship, and have marked it throughout human history, are due as much, perhaps, to misunderstanding of human nature as to any one other cause. When employers select men unfitted for their tasks, assign them to work in environments where they are handicapped from the start, and associate them together and with executives in combinations which are inherently inharmonious, it is inevitable that trouble should follow.

The larger aspects of the employment problem are treated in the second part of this book. Inasmuch, however, as the subject has been more fully discussed in another volume,[1] no attempt is made to go into details.

Adjustment to environment means very largely the ability successfully to associate with, cooperate with, and secure one's way among one's fellow men. In order to be successful in life, we must first live on terms of mutual cooperation with our parents; second, secure the best instruction possible from our teachers; third, make social progress; fourth, secure gainful employment, either from one employer, as in the case of the laborer and the executive, or from several, as in the cases of professional men. Having secured employment, our progress depends upon our ability to attain promotion, to increase our business or our practice, to add to our patrons. Salesmen must sell more, and more advantageously. Attorneys must convince judges and juries, as well as obtain desired testimony from witnesses. Preachers and other public speakers of all classes must entertain, interest, arouse, and convince their audiences. Writers must each appeal successfully to his particular public as well as to his publisher. Engineers must establish and sustain successful relationship with clients, employers, and employees.

In the third part of this book, therefore, we deal more or less at length with the psychological processes of persuasion and their application in various forms and to the varied personalities of those whom we wish to persuade.

Finally, in the fourth part, we devote three chapters to a consideration of the Science of Character Analysis by the Observational Method, the principles of which underlie all of the observations and suggestions appearing in the first three parts.

In presenting the material in this volume, our aim has been not to propound a theory, but merely to make practical, for the use of our readers, so far as possible, the results of our own experiences in this field.

[Footnote 1: The Job, The Man, The Boss, by Katherine M.H. Blackford, M.D., and Arthur Newcomb.]

PART ONE

ANALYZING CHARACTER IN VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

Analyzing Character

CHAPTER I

CAUSES OF MISFITS

"Blessed is the man who has found his work."--Carlyle.

Only the rarest kind of soul has a clear call to his vocation. Still rarer is he who, knowing his work, can create circumstances which will permit him to do it. Of the thousands of young people who have sought us for counsel, only a very small percentage have had even a vague idea of what they are fitted to do, or even what they wished to do. Strange to say, this lack of definite knowledge as to vocation holds true of those who have just graduated from college or university. Many a college graduate has said to us: "Why, I shall teach for a few years until I have fully made up my mind just what I wish to do. Then I shall take my post-graduate course in preparation for my life work." Even so late a decision as this often proves unsatisfactory.

IGNORANCE AND PURPOSELESSNESS

The causes for uncertainty as to work are many and varied. And yet all the many causes can be traced to two fundamental deficiencies in human nature which are but poorly supplied in our traditional systems of training and education. The first of these is, of course, ignorance--ignorance of self, ignorance of work, ignorance on the part of parents, teachers, and other advisors; ignorance on the part of employers. As a race, we do not know human nature; we do not know how to determine, in advance of actual, painful and costly experience, the aptitudes of any individual. We blunder a good deal even in trying to learn from experience. We do not know work; we do not know its requirements, its conditions, its opportunities, its emoluments. And so, in our ignorance, we go astray; we lead others astray. We neglect important and vital factors in human success and happiness because we do not know how important and how vital they are. Our ignorance of their importance is due to our ignorance of human nature and of work.

A second cause for our uncertainty lies in the almost universal human habit of purposelessness. Drifting, not steering, is the way of nearly all lives. It is hard mental work to plan, to consider, to study, to analyze; in short, to think. Someone has said that the average man would rather lie down and die than to take the trouble really to think. It is easier to await the knock of opportunity than to study her ways and then go out and capture her. She treads paths which may be known. She has a schedule which may be learned. She may thus be met as certainly as by appointment. Those who await her knock at the door may be far from where she passes.

We in America, especially, place altogether too high a value on our ingeniousness, our resourcefulness. We therefore put off the evil day. We say to ourselves: "There is plenty of time. I'll manage somehow or other when the time comes for action." We are rather proud of our ability to meet emergencies. So we do not plan and take precautions, that emergencies may not arise. It is too easy to drift through school and college, taking the traditional, conventional studies that others take, following the lines of least resistance, electing "snap courses," going with the crowd. It is too easy to take the attitude: "First I will get my education and develop myself, and then I will know better what I am fitted to do for a life work." And so we drift, driven by the winds of circumstance, tossed about by the waves of tradition and custom. Eventually, most men find they must be satisfied with "any port in a storm." Sailors who select a port because they are driven to it have scarcely one chance in a thousand of dropping anchor in the right one.

In our ignorance, we do not know how fatal to success and happiness is this lack of purpose. We fail to impress it upon our youth. And, when one demands chart and compass, we cannot supply them. No wonder belief in luck, fate, stars, or a meddling, unreasonable Providence is almost universal!

Ignorance and lack of definite purpose, the two prime causes of misfits, have many different ways of bungling people into the wrong job and keeping them there.

IMMATURE JUDGMENT

The first of these is immaturity of judgment on the part of young people. There is a popular fallacy that the thing which a young man or a young woman wants most to do must be the thing for which he or she is preeminently fitted. "Let him follow his bent," say some advisors, "and he will find his niche." This does not happen often. The average young man is immature. His tastes are not formed. He is undeveloped. His very best talents may have never been discovered by himself or others. It is well known to those who study children that a boy's earliest ambitions are to do something he thinks spectacular and romantic. Boys long to be cab drivers, locomotive engineers, policemen, cowboys, soldiers and aviators.

A little nephew of ours said he wanted to be a ditch-digger. Asked why, he said: "So I can wear dirty clothes, smoke a pipe, and spit tobacco juice in the street." The little fellow is really endowed with an inheritance of great natural refinement and a splendid intellect. As he grows older, his ideals will change and he will discover there is much to ditch-digging besides wearing dirty clothes, smoking a pipe, and expectorating on the public highways. He will also learn that there are things in life far more desirable than these glorious privileges. Of course, these are mere boyish exuberances, and most people do not take them seriously. On the other hand, they illustrate the unwisdom of trusting to the unguided preferences of a youthful mind. The average young man of twenty is only a little more mature than a boy of ten. He still lacks experience and balance.

Those of us who have passed the two-score mark well know how tastes change, judgments grow more mature, ideas develop, and experience softens, ripens or hardens sentiment as the years go by. It is unquestionably true that if children were given full opportunity to develop their tastes and to express themselves in various ways and then given freedom of choice of their vocations, they would choose more wisely than they do under ignorant, prejudiced, or mistaken judgments of parent or teacher. Yet the tragedy of thousands of lives shows how unscientific it is to leave the choice of vocation to the unguided instincts of an immature mind.

INFLUENCE OF ASSOCIATION

Boys and girls often choose their careers because some popular friend or associate exerts an undue influence upon them. George is going to be a doctor. Therefore Joseph decides he, too, will be a doctor. Mary looks forward to being a teacher. Mary is the very intimate chum of Josephine. Then Josephine decides, also, that she is going to be a teacher. We knew one earnest and popular young man in college who persuaded about three dozen of his associates to join him in preparation for the foreign mission field. In one class in college a fad caused several young men to lose good opportunities because they decided to take up the practice of medicine. In one high school class, several young men became railroad employees because the most popular of their number yearned to drive a locomotive. And this enterprising youth, with parental guidance and assistance, became a lawyer.

POOR JUDGMENT OF PARENTS

Parental bad judgment is one of the most frequent causes of misfits. Even when parents are sincere and try to be wise, choice of a child's life work is very difficult for them. In the first place, they either underestimate or overestimate their children. What parent, worthy of the high privilege, can be absolutely impartial in judging the talents of his child? Arthur Brisbane says that Nature makes every baby look like a genius in his mother's eyes, so that she will gladly sacrifice her life, if necessary, for her child. It may be a wise provision, but it does not tend to make parents reliable guides to vocations for their offspring.

Then, many parents do not know work. They do not understand the demands of the different professions. Their point of view is narrowed by their own experiences, which have been, perhaps too harsh, perhaps too easy. Many parents have a narrow, selfish, rather jealous feeling that their children cannot be any more intelligent than they are. "The old farm was good enough for me; it is good enough for my son"; "the old

business was good enough for me; it is good enough for my son." This is the attitude. This is why many parents either refuse their children the advantages of an education and insist upon their going to work at an early age, or compel them to take a hated schooling.

On the other hand, there are parents who consider their children prodigies, geniuses, intended to occupy some great and magnificent position in the world. Most frequently they hold their judgment entirely apart from any real talents on the part of the child. Few human woes are more bitter than the disappointment and heartache of both parent and son when a young man who might have been a successful and happy farmer or merchant fails utterly as an artist or writer.

Parents often persuade their children to enter vocations upon the flimsiest possible pretexts. Almost every child takes a pencil and tries to draw, yet there are many parents who spend thousands of dollars in trying to make great artists of children who have only the most mediocre artistic ability. Mere purposeless drawing of faces and figures is an entirely different thing from the drudgery necessary to become a great artist. The mere writing of little essays and compositions is quite a different thing from the long, hard training necessary to become a writer of any acceptability. Merely because a child finds it easier to dawdle away the hours with a pencil or a brush than to go into the harvest field or into the kitchen is not a good reason for supposing that this preference is an indication of either talent or genius.

A parent's judgment of the requirements of a profession is oftentimes most amusingly erroneous. We remember a father who told us that he was quite certain that his son was born to be a ruler of men. When we asked why, he told us in all seriousness that from early childhood his boy's blood boiled with indignation against people who had committed indignities upon kings and princes. Of course, in one sense of the word, this parent was insane, and yet his bad judgment was scarcely more ridiculous than that of many other parents. We have met parents who seemed to think that success in the practice of law depended wholly upon the ability to make speeches. We have seen other parents who thought that success in banking depended upon the ability to count money and hold on to it. Even intelligent people have the false idea that an architect needs only to be a good draughtsman. The number of people who imagine that success in business is won by shrewdness and sharp practice is very large.

PARENTAL PREJUDICES

Parents are often influenced by the most irrelevant of prejudices in counseling their children as to vocation. A man who has had an unfortunate experience with a lawyer is very likely to oppose strenuously any move on the part of his son to study and practice law. Many practical men have intense prejudices against art, music, literature, and other such professions for their sons. The number of parents who are prejudiced against a college education is legion. On the other hand, there are a goodly number of men who are prejudiced against any vocation for their sons which does not involve a college education.

Many parents who have worked hard and toiled unremittingly at any particular profession oftentimes feel that they want their children to do something easier, something requiring less drudgery, and so bitterly oppose their following in their fathers' footsteps. On the other hand, many fathers are domineering in their determination that their sons shall follow the same vocation in which they made their success.

Parents are often prejudiced in favor of vocations followed by dear friends or by men whom they greatly admire. A successful lawyer, preacher, engineer, or business man will influence the choice of vocations for the children of many of his admiring friends and acquaintances.

Multitudes of parents have foolish prejudices against any kind of work which soils the hands or clothing--even against the dinner-pail. On the other hand, hard-fisted parents may have prejudices against any vocation which keeps the hands soft and white, and the clothing clean and fine.

Thus, in many ways do the prejudices of parents, based upon ignorance, work tragedy in the lives of children. Either through a sense of duty and loyalty or because they have not sufficient solid masonry in their backbones, children follow the wishes of their parents and many all but ruin their lives as a result.

"THE LEARNED PROFESSIONS"

One of the most disastrous prejudices upon the part of parents is that in favor of what are called "the learned professions." To make a lawyer, a physician, or a minister of one's son is held to be the highest ambition on the part of large numbers of otherwise intelligent fathers and mothers. The result of this kind of prejudice on the part of so many parents is that the so-called learned professions are over-crowded--and overcrowded with men and women unfitted for their tasks, both by natural inheritance and by education and training. There follows mediocre Work, poor service, low pay, poverty, disease, and misery.

FAMILY TRADITIONS

There are traditions in some families which carry their curse along with them down through the generations. There are families of preachers, families of soldiers, families of lawyers, families of physicians, families of teachers. Many a young man who would have otherwise been a success in the world has toiled along at a poor, dying rate, trying to live up to the family tradition and make a success of himself as a teacher, or lawyer, when he ought to have been a mechanic, an actor, or a banker.

Another form of parental prejudice is a father's desire to have his son become a success in the vocation which he himself longed to enter, but could not. "My father is a successful business man," said a young man to us not long ago. "When he was a young man he wanted to enter law school and practice law, but because of lack of funds and because he had to support his widowed mother's family, he did not have the opportunity. All his life he has regretted that he was unable to realize his ambition. From my earliest years he has talked to me about becoming a great lawyer; he spent thousands of dollars in sending me through high school, college and law school; he has given me years of post-graduate work in law. I have now been trying to practice law for two years and have made a complete failure of it. Yet, so intense is his desire that I shall realize his ambition, that he is willing to finance me, in the hope that, eventually, I may be able to succeed in the practice of law. And yet I hate it. I hate it so that it seems to me I cannot drive myself ever to enter a law office for another day."

POOR JUDGMENT OF TEACHERS

When bad judgment and prejudice of parents do not interfere with a child's development and his selection of a vocation, he is often turned into wrong channels by the bad judgment of his teacher or teachers. It is natural for many teachers to try to influence their favorite pupils to enter the teaching profession in the same special branch to which the teachers themselves are attached. We once knew a professor of Latin who was an enthusiast on the subject. As the result of his influence, many of his students became teachers of Latin. Teachers, like parents, also frequently fail to see the indications of aptitude where it is very great.

Like parents, teachers also are oftentimes ignorant of the requirements of work. They are frequently narrow in their training and experience, and therefore do not understand much about practical life, practical work, and practical requirements. Many teachers, even college professors, seem to be obsessed with the idea that a student who learns a subject easily will be successful in making a practical application of it. Not long ago a student in engineering in one of our most prominent universities came to us for consultation. He told us that his professors all agreed that he was well fitted to succeed as an engineer. He, however, had no liking for the profession and did not believe that he would either enjoy it or be successful in it. Our observations confirmed his opinions. It turned out that his instructors thought him qualified for engineering merely from the fact that he learned easily the theoretical principles underlying the practice.

ECONOMIC NECESSITY

Perhaps one of the most potent causes of misfits in vocation is economic necessity. The time comes in the life of most boys when they must earn their own living or, perhaps, help support the parental family. In such a case, a search is made for a job. Local conditions, friendship, associations, chance vacancies--almost any consideration but that of personal fitness governs in the choice of the job. Once a boy is in a vocation, he is more than likely to remain in it--or, because of unfitness, to drift aimlessly into another, for which he is even less adapted. An entertaining writer in the "Saturday Evening Post" has shown how the boy who accidentally enters upon his career as a day laborer soon finds it impossible to graduate into the ranks of skilled labor. He remains not only a day laborer, but an occasional laborer, his periods of work interspersed with longer and longer periods of unemployment. Unemployment means bad food, unwholesome sanitary conditions and, worst of all, bad mental and moral states. These are followed by disease, incompetency, inefficiency, weakness, and, in time, the man becomes one of the unemployed and unemployable wrecks of humanity. Crime then becomes practically the only avenue of escape from starvation or pauperism.

Thousands of young men taking a job, no matter how they may dislike the work, feel compelled to remain in it because it is their one hope of income. The longer they remain in it the harder it is for them to make a change. Sad, indeed, is the case of the boy or girl who is compelled, in order to make a living or to help support father, mother, brothers and sisters, to drop into the first vacancy which offers itself.

RESTLESSNESS

The restlessness of many a boy and girl results in his or her choice of an utterly wrong vocation. Boys whose parents would be glad to see them through college or technical school cannot wait to begin their careers. Impatient and restless, they undertake the work which will yield quick results rather than develop their real talents or seek opportunities for advancement of which they are by nature capable. Over and over again those who come to us for consultation say: "Father would have been willing to have put me through school, but I couldn't wait; I simply had to get out and have my own way. I have never ceased to regret it. Now I have to work hard with my hands; with a proper education, and in my right job, I could have used my head." The reader has doubtless heard many such stories from friends and acquaintances. The world is full of misfits who failed of their great opportunity because they were too restless, too impatient, to make proper preparations for their life work. This restlessness, unfortunately, is a characteristic of many of the most energetic, most capable, and most intelligent young people, to whom an education would be worth much, to whom proper training and preparation would bring unusual self-development. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that the young man or young woman and his or her parents or guardian should be especially cautious when there is this feeling of intense eagerness to begin work.

VERSATILITY

Perhaps one of the most difficult causes of misfits to overcome is versatility. He who can do many things well seems always to have great difficulty in fixing upon any one thing and doing that supremely well. The versatile man is usually fond of variety, changeable, fickle; he loves to have many irons in the fire; he likes to turn from one kind of work to another. It is his great failing that he seldom sticks at any one thing long enough to make a marked success of it. Because of his great versatility, too, he is often a serious problem, even for those who can study his case scientifically. It is difficult to give him counsel and it is even more difficult for him to give heed to that counsel when it has been given. The one hope of the exceedingly versatile individual is to find for himself some vocation which has within it an opportunity for the exercise of many different kinds of talents, and for turning quickly from one kind of work to another. Routine, monotony, detail work, and work which is confining in its character and presents a continual sameness of environment, should be avoided by this type of individual.

MEDIOCRITY AND UNGUESSED TALENTS

The inability to do any one thing particularly well is, in its way, as serious a handicap in the selection of a vocation as great versatility. One who can do nothing well finds it just as hard to decide upon a vocation as one who can do everything well. Perhaps the large majority of those who come to us for consultation do so because they feel that they have no particular talent. Oftentimes this is the case. But frequently there are undeniable talents which have simply never been discovered and never developed. Even in the case of those with no particular talent, there is always some combination of aptitudes, characteristics, disposition, and other circumstances which makes one particular vocation far more desirable than any other. It is most important that the individual with only a moderate inheritance of intelligence and ability should learn to invest his little in the most profitable manner possible.

Those who escape wrong choice of vocation on account of their own bad judgment and errors in selection; who are not turned aside into the wrong path by the bad judgment, prejudices, and other errors of parents; who escape from the clutches of sincere and well-meaning, but unwise, teachers; who are not thrown into the nearest possible vacancies by economic necessity; who do not fall short of their full opportunities because of restlessness; who do not have their problems complicated by too great versatility or too little ability, still have many a rock and shoal to avoid.

BLUNDERS OF EMPLOYERS

One very frequent cause of misfits in vocation is the bad judgment of employers. This bad judgment, like that of parents and teachers, arises from ignorance--ignorance of human nature, of the particular individual, and, strange to say, of the requirements of the work to be done. Whole volumes could be written on the bad judgment of employers in selecting, assigning, and handling their employees. This, however, is not the place for them. Neither is this the place for the discussion of the remedies to be applied.

Even after the young man has entered a vocation and found that he does not fit in it, there is plenty of opportunity for him to make a change if he is made of the right stuff and can secure the right kind of counsel and guidance. But this "IF" is a tremendously big one.

Many causes--both inside and outside of himself--tend to prevent the average man from changing from a vocation for which he is not fit to one in which he is fit. Perhaps a brief consideration of some of these factors in the problem may be of assistance to you.

SOCIAL AMBITION

One reason for continuing in the wrong vocation is social ambition. Rightly or wrongly--probably wrongly--there are certain vocations which entitle one to social recognition. There are others which seem, at least, to make it difficult for one to secure social recognition. Social ambition, therefore, causes many a man to cling desperately to the outskirts of some profession for which he is unfitted, in the everlasting hope of making a success of it and thus winning the social recognition which is his supreme desire.

Poor, short-sighted, and even blind, victims of their own folly!

They do not see that any work which is human service is honorable. They miss the big truth that the man who delivers better goods or renders better service than other men is not only entitled to profit, but also has, by divine right, unassailable social standing.

LAZINESS

One of the most potent causes of failure is laziness. And the worst form of the malady is mental laziness. Once a man is in any line of work, he simply remains there by following the lines of least resistance. It requires, in the first place, hard mental effort to decide upon a new line of work. It requires analysis of work,

analysis of one's self, of conditions, and of environment, in order to make an intelligent and worthy change. Not only this, but an advantageous change in vocation usually involves additional study, additional training, hard, grinding work in preparation for the new task. And it is altogether too easy for the lazy man to drift along, mediocre and obscure, in some vocation for which he is poorly fitted than to go through the grueling, hard work of preparing himself for one in which he will find an opportunity for the use and development of his highest and best talents.

LACK OF OPPORTUNITY

Many men do not change their vocations, when they find that they are misfits, because of lack of opportunity. There may be no real chance for them in the locality where they live and conditions may make it almost impossible for them to leave. Of course, the strong, courageous soul can *make* its own opportunities. Theoretically, perhaps, everyone can create circumstances. But, in real life, there are comparatively few strong, courageous souls--few who can mould conditions to their will. Probably, however, the average man could do much more than he does to improve his opportunities were it not for inertia, lack of self-confidence, and lack of courage, all of which he could overcome if he would.

It is oftentimes the case that the man who desires to make a change feels that the only work which would appeal to him is in a profession or trade already overcrowded. This may be true in the locality where he lives, but there is always room for every competent man in any truly useful kind of work. For the man who is well qualified, by natural aptitudes and training, no profession is overcrowded.

LACK OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Many men of intelligence, who, perhaps, know what their calling should be, are compelled to continue in work which is uncongenial and for which they are poorly fitted because of their lack of education and training. Hundreds of men and women come to us, only to find that they have started in the wrong work and have remained in it so long that a change to their true vocation is practically impossible. They have assumed responsibilities which they cannot shirk. The education and training needed would take too long and would cost too much. Yet many have toiled away at night and in odd moments on correspondence courses or in night schools, and have thus, finally, won their way to their rightful places in the work of the world. But at what a cost!

It is of the highest importance that every individual should learn as early as possible in life what career he is best fitted to undertake. Every year spent in mistaken preparation or uncongenial employment makes proper training more expensive and more difficult. There are many arts which, perhaps, cannot be learned properly after one has reached maturity. It is said that no one has ever become a great violinist who did not begin his study of the instrument before the age of twelve. However that may be, psychologists and anatomists agree in informing us that the brain of a human being is exceedingly plastic in childhood, and that it gradually grows more and more impervious to impressions and changes as the individual matures. Sad, indeed, is the case, therefore, of the individual who waits to learn what his vocational fitness is until he is fully mature and is, perhaps, loaded up with the cares and responsibilities of a family, and cannot take either the time or the money to secure an education which his natural aptitude and his opportunities demand.

DEFICIENT SELF-CONFIDENCE

Many men remain in uncongenial occupations because they lack confidence in themselves. This is distressingly common. Everywhere we find men and women occupying humble positions, doing some obscure work, perhaps actually frittering away their time upon trifles and mere details, doing something which does not require accuracy, care, responsibility, or talent, merely for fear they may not be able to succeed in a career for which they are eminently fitted.

On one occasion a young man of the most undoubted dramatic talent and oratorical ability sought us for counsel. "I have always felt," he said, "a strong inner urge, sometimes almost irresistible, to go upon the platform or the stage. But, because I have lacked confidence in myself, I have always, at the last moment, drawn back. The result is that to-day I am dissatisfied and unhappy in the work I am doing. I do it poorly. I long constantly for an opportunity to express myself in public. Years are going by, I have not developed my talent as I should, and I am beginning to feel that my case is hopeless." This lack of self-confidence is more common by far than many people would imagine. Arthur Frederick Sheldon has said: "Most men accomplish too little because they attempt too little." Our observations incline us to believe that this is the truth. Taking humanity as a whole, far more men fail because they try to do too little than because they try to do too much. Humanity is a great mine of undiscovered and undeveloped talents. It follows that we fall far short of our best because we do not expect and demand enough of ourselves.

CONSERVATISM

A man came to us for consultation in regard to his vocation. Just why he had come, it afterward turned out, it was hard to see. Perhaps he only wanted to settle matters in his own mind without taking definite action upon them. He was engaged in mercantile business, a business left to him by his father. He hated it. After a careful analysis, we informed him that he had undoubted scientific talents, and that, with training, he could make a name for himself in research and discovery. He was overjoyed at this information, but he manifested no disposition to change his vocation. He said: "Much as I dislike the mercantile business, I hate to change. A change will mean selling out, upsetting my whole mode of life and activity, removing into a different community, beginning a new life in many of its phases. I cannot look forward to such a complete revolution with any degree of pleasure, so I guess I will have to keep along in the old store, much as I would like to devote the rest of my life to test-tubes, crucibles, and scales."

There are many such men. Change is more hateful to them than unloved work. They fall into grooves and ruts. They would rather continue in their well-worn ways than to go through the mental anguish of breaking old ties, remaking methods of life and work, moving away from friends and relatives, and otherwise changing environment, conditions, and employment.

LACK OF COURAGE

Many men have self-confidence and yet lack courage. That may seem to be a paradoxical statement, but if the reader will study carefully some of the men he knows, he will understand that this is the truth. Men may have plenty of confidence in themselves, but they may lack the courage to face difficulties, to overcome obstacles, to meet hard conditions, to pass through disagreeable experiences. Such are the men who lack the initiative, the push, the aggressiveness, to do as well as they know how, to do as much as they can, to undertake the high achievement for which they have the ability. The cases of such men would be hopeless were it not for the fact that some powerful incentive, like an emergency or necessity, some tremendous enthusiasm, some strong determination, some deep conviction, urges them on to the expression of the fulness of their powers. Lacking even any of these, it is possible for the man who lacks courage to develop it.

Courage is developed by doing courageous acts. The man who feels that he lacks courage, who knows that he needs to forget his fears and his anxieties, has half won his battle. Knowing his deficiencies, he can by the very power of his will compel himself to courageous words and acts, thus increasing and developing his courage and, as a result, his efficiency.

LACK OF AMBITION

Finally, people do not undertake work in their proper vocations because of a lack of ambition. This is, indeed, a fundamental deficiency. Perhaps it underlies many of those we have already described. Certain it is that we usually obtain what we most earnestly and ardently desire. Someone has said that when a man knows

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