

The Tempo of Modern Life

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The newly arrived tourist from Europe to America receives a vast number of rather staggering impressions. Landing annually there myself, I also receive a great number, but they are in a different key from those of the foreigner. America being my own land and New York my “home town,” its skyscrapers, its taxi-drivers, speak-easies, and Sunday newspapers have no novelty. They have long ceased to strike me as extraordinary. But there is one thing that never fails to strike me annually, and as unequivocally, one might say as brutally, as it does the foreigner. That is the abrupt change in the tempo of life. The trip itself in no way prepares one for it. I have made it so often that it is not in itself at all an exciting event. The six days at sea, spent mostly in sleeping, eating and reading, merely prolong, and even lower the tempo of living I left in London where my work for the most part keeps me now. But from the moment I have won my way, in fierce fight, into a taxi at the dock, I am conscious of an overwhelming change. The most recent French author to write a book on us after a few weeks’ trip, in which his admiration is expressed with a violence only equalled by its lack of critical quality, notes that “*le rythme du pays tout entier est à cent quand le nôtre est à dix*”: “the rhythm of the whole country is a hundred while ours is ten.” As the rhythm of London is distinctly slower than that of Paris, it is quite evident why in passing from my quiet flat off Campden Hill to a fifteenth-story room overlooking Forty-second Street I find this difference in tempo almost appalling. On my return to Europe, of course, the impression is as strong, only reversed. “On landing in England,” one of the ladies of my party remarked last time, “I always feel as though someone had put a cool hand on my forehead.” When we landed some weeks ago and drove to our flat through Trafalgar Square there was a larger crowd collected than I had ever seen there before. Amy Johnson, for the moment the idol of the people after her flight to Australia, had just passed on her way to be received by

the King. But the contrast with New York, seven days behind us, was little short of amazing. “How strangely quiet it is,” my wife said; “it’s just like Sunday.”

I doubt if there were any such difference noticeable in the eighteenth century. At least the book-writing traveler, whom we have always had with us, did not at that period make comments which would indicate marked difference between the pace of life here and abroad. By 1835, however, we find De Tocqueville writing that “no sooner do you set your foot upon American ground than you are stunned by a kind of tumult; a confused clamor is heard on every side; and a thousand simultaneous voices demand the satisfaction of their social wants.” From that day to this the difference has been markedly increasing.

But if there is a vast difference in tempo between Europe and America, there is also as great a one between the life of our own generation on each side of the water and that of our respective fathers and grandfathers on each side. It is true that some forms of nervous and useless hustle date from longer ago than we might think. One of the most characteristic scenes in America may be witnessed any morning at the Lackawanna or Erie stations on the Jersey shore when scores of commuters leap from their trains and join in a mad flight for the Tube, where the trains run to Manhattan, I believe, on a three-minute schedule. To most of those whose coat-tails fly in the breeze and whose hearts before long will begin to act queerly, the three minutes can really be of slight importance. It is merely instinctive reaction to the thought of a train to be caught, though a leisurely walk to the next one would serve their purpose as well and their hearts better. In Allen Nevins’s delightful history of editorial writing, I find, however, that when the Fulton Ferry was new, and the fastest means of transport between Brooklyn and Manhattan, a similar scene could be witnessed daily at the slip. On the whole, nevertheless, if one thinks over the sort of life led in innumerable homes a generation ago, the fact of an immense speeding up in the process of living is clear and true. People then, as we say, “had time.” Now, no one “has time.” Why not? Is there really a speeding-up process

at work throughout the world? And if there is, what does it consist in and what are its effects to be?

Some years ago, in a noteworthy effort to establish history on a scientific basis, Henry Adams attempted to fit certain phenomena of society into the laws of physics. He himself was quite aware of the extremely tentative nature of his suggestions, and I need not here discuss the reasons for what I believe to have been his failure, which I give elsewhere in this book. Even if Adams did not succeed, his work was immensely interesting, and I believe will receive more attention in the future than it has in the past. In his effort to bring some sort of order out of the multitudinous "facts" of human history, Adams was struck by the very point which we are considering, that is, the change in tempo, which he chose to call, in terms of physics, "acceleration." Using man's consumption of power, and the physical law of squares, as data and method, he tried to plot a curve of man's destiny. I will not here involve the reader farther in Adams's theory. He made the mistake of using concepts in one field of thought that belonged only to another. But that there is some law of acceleration at work in the universe as applied to man would seem to be true. I shall merely try to give some of the indications without myself attempting in turn any expression of them in physical laws.

No one knows where or when some lower form of being first took on distinctly human characteristics. It has been estimated that the Java Ape Man, *Pithecanthropus*, lived a half-million years ago. A million years have been given to the skull recently found in China. Whatever validity these guesses may or may not have, we can safely give man several hundred thousand years before he rises above the stage of stone implements and hunting. During this long period he was called on to make few adjustments to any change in environment. These were probably called forth by the terrific changes in climate due to the periods of Arctic cold, alternating with far longer periods of tropical heat. As Professor Coleman says in his *Ice Ages*, "these short spells of trial and stress meant far more for the development of the world's inhabitants than all the long periods of ease and sloth when the earth was a hothouse." He adds that, "it may be that the races of civilized

men are merely evanescent phenomena bound up with the bracing climate of a brief ice-age, to sink, after a few more thousand years, into a state of tropical sloth and barbarism when the world shall have fallen back into its usual relaxing warmth and moisture, the East African conditions which have been so customary in the past.” However this may be, the tempo of change, due to climate, which was all to which the hunting, eating, sleeping, breeding man of these hundreds of thousands of years had to adjust himself, was a rhythm in which swings could be measured in tens of thousands of years. It was a tempo of inconceivable slowness.

As he made discoveries – fire, smelting of copper and iron, the wheel, agriculture, domestication of animals – the tempo quickened a bit, but vast spaces of time were still allowed for adjustments. Even when we get into the historical period of recorded history – a mere few thousand years compared with the hundreds of thousands behind it – we find a slow rhythm in such major social phenomena as the rise and fall of empires and civilizations. In the Far East, discarding centuries of earlier myth, we have reliable history of China for over two thousand years, and find Japan paying tribute to her before Augustus defeated Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium. And Japan and China remained almost unchanged till yesterday. The civilization in Crete can be traced from 3000 B.C. to its decadence about 1100 B.C. The art history of Egypt extends from 4000 B.C. until she was finally conquered in 525 B.C. If national periods of two and three thousand years seem long to us, yet they were brief compared to the long pulsations of climate in the dawn of man. The pulse was beating faster. The tempo of life was increasing.

I need not trace the changes in the Middle Ages and down to the nineteenth century – the introduction of gunpowder, the invention of printing, the new scientific ideas, later the discovery of America, and the opening of a new world on all sides. They are familiar to every schoolboy. The tempo of life, the need for constant readjustment was showing another great increase for the individual and for society. But even so, what we may call this third period in the history of the acceleration of our life was still slow in comparison with that next in store. A few events will give us a rough measure

for the tempo prevailing in it. The thirteenth century saw the invention of the mariner's compass; the fourteenth that of gunpowder; the fifteenth, printing and the discovery of America; the sixteenth, the circumnavigation of the globe and the invention of the spinning wheel; the seventeenth, the telescope, Galileo's trial, and the first newspaper; the end of the eighteenth, the spinning jenny and the cotton gin. Each century was bringing an important invention or two, and the human mind was being called on to make increasingly rapid adjustments to new modes of thought. But the population of the world was still overwhelmingly agricultural in occupation, and the speed of communication, when there was any, was still limited to the tempo of the past ten thousand years – that of a horse by land and a sailing ship by sea. With the first successful use of the steam locomotive in 1804 and the steamboat in 1807, a new era dawned. During the next century every decade brought its discoveries which in their aggregate have completely altered the entire social structure, occupational life, and intellectual outlook of mankind. In a very general way, intended to be merely suggestive and not accurate, we may denote “wave lengths” in the tempo of life in the four periods as 30,000; 3000; 100; 10.

There are indications that in our own period, the fourth, we are not yet at the end of the process, and that the tempo is still being quickened. Take, for example, the length of the business cycle, which is the resultant of a great mass of social and psychological factors. During the nineteenth century its length was about twenty years, but many economists are of the opinion, which seems to be borne out by the facts, that under the conditions under which we now live we must expect short, sharp setbacks at much more frequent intervals; that is, that the business rhythm is essentially a faster one. The investor with long experience is fully conscious of the effect of our faster tempo. A decade or two may be all that embraces the life of a great and colossally profitable industry from its beginning to its decadence, as for example the bicycle industry of the 1890's, and the automobile industry, which has been the marvel of the world for two decades but which would seem now to be facing the much retarded pace of replacement sales instead of installation ones. The same speeding up has taken place in the life of the

workman, not only in the speeding up of his daily work but in concentrating his working life between school and forty or forty-five years of age, and cutting down what was often a lifelong relation to his employer to a daily or weekly wage contract.

The reader can follow out the process for himself in almost every department of life. In art and literature “periods” follow one another with such rapidity as to be in danger of telescoping, and assume the air of mere fads. In public taste the same quickening of rhythm is notable. Publishers will tell you that the life of a book is now considerably shorter than twenty years ago and that the profit to be made from it, if made, must be made much more quickly. The tempo of life varies with occupation and location, being slowest on the farm, though with radio and automobile, it has been greatly speeded up there. For the general tempo of our country, therefore, (and the same is more or less true of others), it is notable that whereas in 1790 about ninety per cent of the entire population lived on farms, in 1925 only twenty-five per cent did so. The tempo of their mental life, as of the population at large of all classes, may be measured by the length of time it has taken for revolutionary ideas to be taken into the intellectual outlook of the general public. Copernicus published his *De Revolutionibus Orbium Coelestium* in 1543, and I think we may say that it was a century and a half before his theory had really permeated the thinking mass. Darwin published his *Origin of Species* in 1859, and it was perhaps forty years or so before evolution was generally recognized as safe and respectable doctrine. It was hardly a few months after Einstein proclaimed his theory of relativity before it was beginning to be taken up into the general discussions and outlook of vast numbers of people, even if in a half-understood way. We may also note that whole nations, with a total population of well on to a billion, such as India, China, and Japan, have suddenly had the tempo of their lives altered from that of the very beginning of the historic period to that of the fastest pulse beat of the West. The alteration in the position of woman has been less a change in tempo perhaps than a mere added source of confusion.

But I need not labor the point longer. It seems to me that as we survey the entire past of man the fact emerges clearly that his life shows a perpet-

ually increasing tempo. The movement grows always faster, never slower. The phenomenon would appear to be a law of nature, though our knowledge is not of a sufficiently exact sort to enable us to establish reference points for the plotting of an accurate curve. Such a curve, however, if we accept roughly the four periods noted above, would show a very long, slowly ascending line for the first period; a sharp upward swing at the beginning of the historic period, and a more rapidly ascending line for a shorter length; another sharp deflection upward around the Middle Ages, and a yet shorter rising line; and lastly, for us to-day, a very sharp upward turn and a very short but almost vertically rising line to 1930. Given that much, the makers of graphs may amuse themselves by plotting it into our future. The optimists might not be satisfied with the result, but after all we must not press the graphic representation too far. Let us try to search the more immediate future a little without the aid of the law of squares.

At this point, if the reader has followed me thus far, he may ask just what do we mean, after all, by the “tempo of life”? Perhaps a clearer definition would be wise before we attempt to appraise the effect of an accelerated tempo on man. Whether any more “events” are happening in the universe now than in earlier times would lead us into unfathomable bogs of metaphysics, but for our purpose it is enough to grant that more events are happening to each man of which he is conscious. In other words, a resident of New York to-day is getting more sensations and of a more varied sort than the Neanderthal or early man of several hundreds of thousands of years ago. Owing to this number and variety of sensations and his constantly shifting environment, modern man is also called upon to make a far greater number of adjustments to the universe than was his remote relative in the caves and forests of Germany or Java. It is the number of these sensations and adjustments in a given time that makes the tempo of life. As the number and variety of sensations increase, the time which we have for reacting to and digesting them becomes less, as it does also for adjusting ourselves to our environment when that alters at an advancing rate. The rhythm of our life becomes quicker, the wave lengths, to borrow a physical concept, of that

kind of force which is our mental life grow shorter. If I am right in what I have outlined in a somewhat vague and general fashion above, our mental life has altered its rhythm four times, each time the wave length of the force growing shorter, the vibration more rapid. Does this have any effect upon us? I think there is no question but what it does.

Rhythm in the universe is fundamental in its effect upon our minds. For example, certain rhythmical waves of energy (to use a loose term), of long wave length and low frequency, make themselves known to us as heat; increase the rhythm a little by shortening the wave length and increasing the frequency, and we become aware of them as color; continue the process, and we get electricity; do so again, and we get a phenomenon which we can use but cannot perceive by our senses, the X-rays; and so on. A change of rhythm, whatever it may be in reality, is for us a change in essential nature.

I do not wish to press physical concepts too far and so I suggest an effect of rhythm which we encounter whenever we read poetry, and, though we are less conscious of it, prose. Certain sorts of thought or emotion go with certain rhythms. Let us take at haphazard two quotations from Shakespeare. The first is in the rhythm of "Yankee Doodle."

*King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor down.*

Now let us take another:

*To die, to sleep;
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause. . .*

Neither of these series of thoughts could be expressed in the rhythm of the other without profoundly altering its effect on us. There is something in

ourselves, some long-established rhythm of our own, which reacts in various ways to the rhythms of the outer world. A marked alteration in the tempo of life might, therefore, be expected to alter profoundly, possibly disastrously, our reactions. To use an extreme example: if, owing to a sudden shift, heat waves became sensed by us as light, and electricity as heat, and light as X-rays, we should become so completely out of adjustment that the result would be a breakdown. To a lesser but a real extent, the same result comes from a sudden change in the tempo of our lives. We are all familiar with the effect which sudden wealth is apt to have upon its acquirer. It is because there has been for him a sudden change in tempo – a great increase in the number and variety of sensations and in the number of called-for adjustments.

One marked effect, both for good and evil, in a rapidly changing environment is the difficulty or impossibility of acquiring habits. To cite a simple example, last year I knew where almost everything I wanted in New York was – my broker, bank, the Consolidated ticket office, my friends' homes and telephone numbers. When I was there this year almost every one had shifted. I had to learn them all over again. My habits had become utterly useless, indeed, worse, for they led me in wrong directions. This break-up of habit may have had the advantage of leading me to new places and buildings, but, on the other hand, life becomes too wearing and impossible without habits. We have to perform a great many acts as easily as walking or eating or we waste an enormous amount of energy for nothing, just as we should if we had to watch over our stomachs for an hour after each meal to see that they digested properly. A considerable habit-pattern is essential for the release of our minds for more important things. The illustration which I have drawn from mere changes in street addresses may be extended to our whole intellectual life and our system of ethics. A certain fluidity in habits is healthful. Too complete a breakdown of the habit-patterns may spell disaster.

Too violent a change in tempo and a too-constantly changing environment tends also to impair the power of concentration on which most of man's highest satisfactions and his chance of improvement depend. As we

rise in the scale from the lowest forms of sensual to the highest spiritual and intellectual enjoyments, the need for concentration is correspondingly increased. I do not mean that sense enjoyments do not play a very important role in our life and mental health. They do. Our body also plays an essential one in permitting us to function at all as self-conscious beings; but the human race would not have advanced far had it never risen above the performance of mere bodily functions and the enjoyment of sensations, nor will either the individual or the race advance which retrogrades in the power of concentrated thought. It is impossible or very difficult for most people to concentrate and think except with a certain amount of leisure and freedom from intrusion, whether the intrusion be that of a visitor or a distracting sensation. If I may illustrate by my personal experience, I may say that I have, I believe, a fair power of concentration due in part to my having had to learn to work in all sorts of places and under all sorts of conditions. On the other hand, I am, I suppose, attuned to the rhythm of life of my earlier American days, a rhythm about like that of England to-day. In passing from the tempo of life there, where my work keeps me a good deal of the time, to America I am at once conscious of increasing difficulty in concentrating and of a marked difference in the kind and quality of my work, a difference which my publishers recognize as well. I react at home to an incredible number of passing impressions but find it hard to sit quietly and ponder them over. In other words, a hailstorm of sensations – they may be merely noises – and an unaccustomed increase in the general tempo are bound to produce in most people the complex of what we call “the tired business man.” Losing the power of concentration in thought, we sink lower and lower to live our lives on the plane of sensation. Some change, as rest, is essential, and when by evening we are weary of the sensations to which we have been accustomed all day, there is nothing left to change to – in a life lived on the plane of sensation – but other sensations. Once we have made the simple division of sensations into agreeable and disagreeable, the scale of value for them becomes purely quantitative, and we prefer the more intense to the less intense. The consequence is that such a life tends to become a mere search for more and more exciting sensations, undermining yet more our power of

concentration in thought. Relief from fatigue and ennui is sought in mere excitation of our nerves, as in speeding cars or emotional movies.

Such a life tends to break down the individual personality, and merge all individuals in the mob. People are much alike in their primitive emotions, as they are in their bodily organs and functions. It is only when they rise into the realms of thought and will that they develop into marked individuals. A suddenly accelerated tempo thus has a strong tendency to lower the whole population to the level of the mob, and to melt down the variety of personalities into a gelatinous mass of humanity flavored with a few pungent sensations.

As I noted above with regard to habit, a certain fluidity is desirable so as to prevent our habit-patterns from attaining too great a rigidity, and our type of civilization from petrifying. A change in environment is also good in so far as it stirs, without breaking down, our power of thought and will. As I have tried to show elsewhere in this volume, however, there is at work in nature a law of diminishing returns. This law indicates that all tendencies and forces operating on our human life, although they may operate beneficially for a while, always attain to a point at which the returns begin to diminish, the benefit is lost, and the effect of operation may even become disastrous. At the present stage in our history we are faced by the very serious problem as to whether those forces which throughout man's career have been steadily increasing the rhythm or tempo of his life, and which have operated beneficially so far, have reached the point of the diminishing return.

There is no use closing our eyes to the possibility that this may be so. There is a good deal of evidence that maladjustment to the new tempo is reaching the point of possible breakdown. We may cite a few figures which indicate the effects of the altered rhythm on our nervous systems. The great increase of nervous disorders of all sorts is notable, but I have no statistics at hand for them as an entire group. We may note, however, that between 1920 and 1927 the deaths from heart disease per hundred thousand population in America, pre-eminently the land of hustle, increased steadily from 137 to 241. Both in England and America the increase in the ratios of insanity

have long been alarming. It was estimated even before the War that if the steady rate of increase shown in England and Wales were maintained, the entire population would have become insane in two centuries more. In the United States between 1880 and 1923, the latest date I have, the number of patients in hospitals for mental disease tripled, rising, without break, from 81 to 245 per 100,000. The continuation of any such tendencies is appalling to contemplate. Between 1889 and 1927 the number of divorces per thousand marriages rose steadily from 60 to 160. In the large American cities to which the population drift is strongly marked, the rate of homicides rose from 3.4 in 1900 to 10.1 in 1927. New York, with a population of ten millions in the metropolitan area, is planning for a population of twenty millions within another generation. Within the past generation the figures indicating the instability of the home, the instability of man's mind, and those for the most serious crime against his person have all tripled. Even making all allowances, we have here alarming evidence of increasing maladjustment to the new tempo of life. We might, without statistical help, pursue this maladjustment in its other effects, such as the enormous increase in the machinery of life, politically and economically, without corresponding increases in our ability to foresee, manage, and control, with a resultant increase in stability of the whole social structure. Or we might note the increase in mob spirit and mob influence, the increasing emergence of mob psychology as a determining factor in social life. But enough has been indicated to show the seriousness of the situation.

A friend of mine, a distinguished explorer and anthropologist, once spent a couple of years among the savages of the upper Amazon. On one occasion he was suddenly called out to civilization, and, with the help of the chief and a train of attendants, he attempted a forced march of three days through the jungle to the nearest settlement. Without grumbling the party made extraordinary speed for the first day and the second. On the third morning, however, when it was time to start, my friend found all the natives sitting on their haunches, looking very solemn and making no preparation to leave. On asking the chief what the trouble was he received the answer, "They are waiting. They cannot move farther until their souls have caught up with

their bodies.” I can think of no better illustration of our own plight to-day. Is there any way of letting our souls, so to say, catch up again with our bodies, or attuning ourselves to the new tempo of life?

We certainly cannot do it so easily as the Amazonian savages. They could reduce the tempo by the simple process of sitting still. We cannot. As I have pointed out, the speeding-up process in human life appears to be imbedded in the universe. The “wave lengths” of our life have been steadily getting shorter, the rhythm faster, by a process over which we have no control. It has been going on for hundreds of thousands of years, with perhaps the four periods of marked acceleration to which I have called attention. Scientific discovery, whether cause or effect of the latest acceleration in tempo, cannot be halted without a complete collapse of our civilization which is based upon it. We must now go on, seeking new inventions, new sources of power, or crash – a civilization in a nose dive. What, then, are the possibilities?

There is, of course, the one that scientific discovery will cease to progress, that new discoveries will come less frequently, that we shall use up our present sources of power without discovering the new ones our captains of industry so confidently but ignorantly predict. That cure would, in the end, be almost worse than the disease. It would entail an almost unthinkable cataclysm.

The only hope would seem to lie in the possibility of our adjusting ourselves to the shorter wave length, the swiftened tempo of our existence, as the race has in the past. It is possible that with each succeeding increasing in tempo man’s powers of adjustment have also been quickened, and that the sinister phenomena we see at present are merely the wreckage of a period of change. It is either that or, like a fly-wheel which turns faster and faster until it reaches the rate at which it breaks to pieces, human society and the human mind may also explode into bits.

If we are to become adjusted, it is evident that in some way we have got to order our lives differently. We have got to bring back, in the new, quickened tempo, some sense of leisure, and secure for ourselves a respite from the hailstorm of sensation and need for constant adjustment, some

new habit patterns, that will enable us to control ourselves nervously, to rise above the plane of sensation, and to concentrate on the things of the spirit. Only thus can we regain control of our individuality and our lives in the whirling flux into which we shall otherwise dissolve. This calls for an intelligent ordering of our existence, for selection from among the goods of life, for the exercise of self-control – in a word, for intelligence and will.

For this I think we can look only, or mainly, to the younger generation among the privileged classes. I use the whole phrase advisedly. The older generation is too set in certain ways of living, in certain requirements of life, too involved in the whole economic system of creating new wants to make new business to make more money to supply all their old wants plus the new ones, to be of much assistance in the great adjustment that is ahead. On the other hand, the lower or unprivileged classes (I use the term in no snobbish sense) are everywhere and in all countries too dazzled by their new toys and new power, too confused by their new wealth of sensation, too untrained in the higher values of life, to be of assistance either. One need only watch the crowds on Broadway, the block-long queues waiting admission to the hundred cinemas of London, the aimless, shuffling masses nightly walking the Kulverstraat in Amsterdam, and similar crowds in every large city, to realize that if they revolt on finding their lives devoid of satisfaction it will be only to secure a yet greater share in the life of sensation.

The hopeful point to-day is that the revolt of intelligent and trained youth is not for mere independence or for money-making but for a better ordering of their whole lives for regaining in some way the chance to become fully rounded human beings and not mere cogs in a machine. In many cases they think they are fighting the older generation. What they are really fighting against is the time-spirit, the increased tempo of life. The older generation has merely been mired in the historic process like antediluvian monsters that have floundered into an asphalt lake.

The effort to reorganize life by selection and emphasis so as to regain leisure and personality and to rise above the mob-complex of sensation is a race between adjustment and collapse. The life of the human spirit has been an amazing adventure from the start. Nobody knows why it has any place

in the universe. Nobody knows what it is. But it has been going on for hundreds of thousands of years. It has been attacked by all sorts of forces, within and without humanity itself. So far it has won its battles, and it has always been led to victory by a select band. Speed and the power to give direction have been in the few; the weight of mass in the many. Both speed and mass are now colossal. If the balance can be maintained, all may yet be well, in spite of the quantitative increase in each. But if the few pass spiritually over to the many, only mass without direction will remain. This has happened to too great an extent in our America in the past few generations. The few, like the many, have given themselves over to material goods and the pleasure of sensation. Abandoning themselves to the pursuit of rapid wealth, worshipping physical comfort and spurious luxury, overwhelmed by the multitude of distractions afforded by every new toy of science, they have tended to lose their sense of human values. It is precisely in the rejection by the younger generation of the standards of values of the older generation, in so far as those standards have debased human values, that I believe the hope of the world lies to-day. Mistakes will be made. They always have been by every generation, and the wine of the new freedom has been too strong for many a head. But if the younger generation – as the more intelligent among it seem determined to do – will re-establish a scale of human values and select from among the wealth of material provided for it those factors that alone conduce to the enjoyment of those values, even in the new tempo of life, leisure and deep satisfactions may again return for all, and mankind may once again have made its adjustment to the new rhythm forced upon it. With each change of tempo man's mind has become somewhat different, and has itself become quickened in proportion to the tempo. With each change the period allowed for readjustment becomes shorter, rhythm vastly faster. The corners must be turned more and more quickly if the process continues. The plotting of the curve may before many generations be followed with tense nerves. Will the law of diminishing returns begin to be felt in the law of increasing tempo? Or will the latter, like the former, at some point, as seems to be indicated, turn back upon itself? Have we attained that point already, or is the younger generation destined to carry the line still

forward for a while? Perhaps no greater crisis ever faced adventurous youth. Democracy may be a passing experiment in the struggle for happiness. It is at any rate a mere tool which may or not in the long run prove useful. It is not to make the world safe for that that the fight with the cosmic force of the time-spirit must be waged. It is for any continued possibility of sane, contented, rounded human lives for as many as may be who can learn to live them. If the intelligent youth of the new generation cannot make the adjustments to the new tempo, cannot create a new social life of human value within the rhythmic framework of the new tempo, democracy and all other catchwords of our day will signify as little as the last moaning of the wind when the ship has sunk below the waves.