



Photos by Ewing Galloway

Which Speed Is Yours?

by GARRET SMITH

"I'M PLANNING to spend a year in Europe next month," the dean of the bar of one of our eastern states told me on the eve of sailing for a Mediterranean tour. He laughed at my look of surprise. "You're thinking of the fellow who remarked that he spent a week in the country one Sunday," he said. "I don't mean I'm going to be so bored that a month'll seem like a year. There's big difference between time that drags because you're tearing yourself to pieces with boredom or worry and time that lingers pleasantly because you're packing it full of new experiences and ideas."

This veteran lawyer, still in active practice at eighty-three, hit on a way of beating a game that most of us think unbeatable. As we mature we all become painfully aware of the speeding up of the years. We resent it bitterly. The desire for long life, the longing for eternal youth, are universal human passions. In childhood each day seems endless. To youth a year stretches out in a limitless vista. But with middle age, day, week, month and year run together at ever-increasing speed. As an old farmer once said to me, "I don't more'n git dressed Monday mornin' than it's time to take my Sattaday-night bath." Why this tragic acceleration of our brief life current? Can we stop it?

Dr. Alexis Carrel in his thought-provoking book "Man, the Unknown" offers a scientific explanation and cure. He defines two kinds of time. One is solar time, an unvarying standard to measure outer events. The other is inner time, which marks the physical and mental

changes within ourselves, the time by which we unconsciously measure our days.

While solar time moves on at a steady rate, our inner time, that is, the rate of change in our bodies and minds, varies continually. The young child grows perceptibly each week. Days are packed with new words, new games, new explorations of his world. Sober sun time seems a slow thing to this racing tempo of his. It becomes only a little less so during adolescence and college days. Then bodily development slows through middle life. The mind tends to become fixed. New ideas and concepts are met less and less frequently. Sun time races past inner time faster and faster.

It's like a man riding a passenger train at sixty miles an hour and overhauling a long freight pounding ahead at a steady thirty miles. The freight seems to the passenger to be standing still as he shoots by so fast he can hardly count its cars. Then, as the passenger train begins to slow down for the next station, the freight seems to be going faster. Slowly the freight gains, until at last it outraces the passenger train. But the freight, which is sun time, hasn't altered its steady pace. It is only the passenger train that has slowed.

Is it possible, by taking thought, to restore for our maturer years some measure of the lingering and apparently endless golden days of childhood? Dr. Carrel believes we can do it by acquiring mental habits that will keep our inner time speeded up, keep the passenger train running at top speed to the end, so that the freight can never overhaul us. Bodily

change is only part of our inner time. The important inner-time factor in later life lies in keeping our minds receptive, alert, active and interested in life.

When the body reaches maturity the power of the mind should still be growing, with its height still far ahead. Justice Holmes was writing Supreme Court decisions in his nineties, at the very summit of his mental vigor.

We can't all speed up our inner time by Mediterranean trips. We don't need to. Two young suburbanites of my acquaintance once took similar, rather monotonous jobs in the same city office. Brown kept his nose in his work, doing it faithfully and well. Jones, though equally efficient, managed to find time for hobbies, social life, civic affairs, good books, plays, music. In inner time Jones lived three days to Brown's one. His activity also kept him alert and physically fit. Both men are fifty now. Brown still has the same job and is an old man waiting to be pensioned. Jones is still a young man and is manager of the office. He has his eye on the presidency of the company and cherishes no notion of retiring for thirty years yet.

The earlier in life we form these active mental habits the better chance we have of beating the clock when it tries to speed up on our maturing years. Balance your hardening arteries with avocations, your declining metabolism with social and civic activities, your halting cell growth with reading and conversation and travel. Fill your days full. Match each gray hair with a new idea. Speed up the true time of your inner life. Live long by the day and let the years go hang.

Snatches

A FINE American patriot, Andrew Furuseth, slipped out of life the other day. He was called the Abe Lincoln of the sea. He fought for safe shipping and the development of American shipping for something like sixty-five years. He had a philosophy for this so-called machine age:

"Safety depends on men. Skilled men are better than the best of machinery. If they want safety at sea, they must maintain and raise the standards of the men who work the ships. Skill is the supreme thing in civilization."

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IF HISTORY repeats itself, Tiah Devitt, the author of "Tall Twelve," in this issue, will have a busy time today. A few weeks ago we ran another tale by her called "Camera Face," which was also illustrated by a cover photograph of a lovely girl. It was the love story of one of those charming young things whose beauty, in advertisements, helps to sell everything from cigarettes to steam shovels.

The appearance of the story and the cover shattered Tiah Devitt's Sunday calm in a way we never expected. "Sunday," she wrote us, "we had telegrams from Portland, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore and Cleveland, and all day the 'phone rang frantically — mostly calls from unattached males who wanted to meet the model on the cover."

There'll never be a surplus of the pretty-girl crop! M.

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