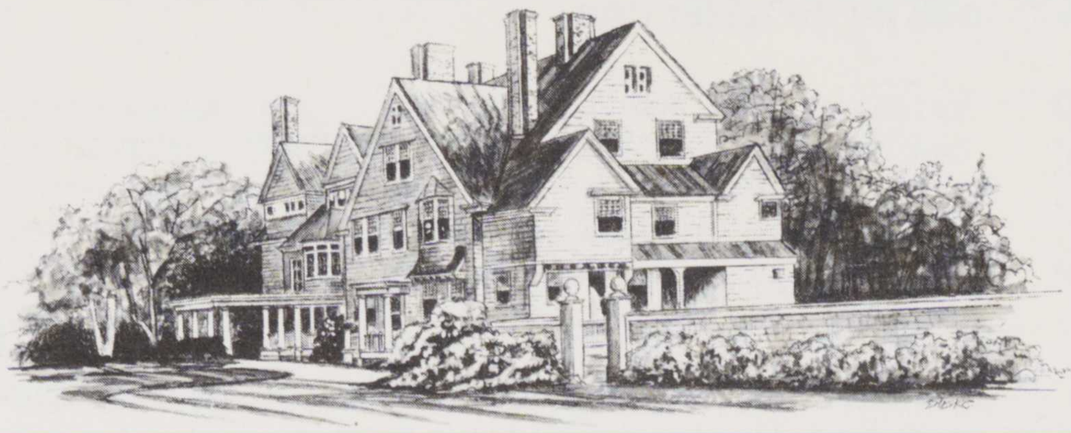
NOTES from F·E·E·



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Is Time Running Out?

All of us have experienced the frustration of that humorously stated maxim, "The hurrier I go the behinder I get." In the fight for freedom, progress sometimes seems limited and the pace painfully slow. Yet, in a world shaped by ideas, change is effected step by step, one by one. Perhaps Leonard Read's little essay of the above title, written in 1958, has even greater meaning thirty years later.

We hear over and over a friendly criticism that goes somewhat as follows: "FEE's educational approach is sound enough in theory. But it's too slow when our country is on the skids. Time is running out on us."

What an anomaly our American civilization presents! Here we are, a people who have invented and perfected more timesaving devices than Abe Lincoln could possibly have imagined while walking twelve miles to borrow an English grammar. Yet, never have so many complained so much about a lack of time to read, to think, to write, to reflect, to comprehend the economic and moral predicates on which a good society rests—indeed, to do any of the things that upgrade the mind and elevate the spirit. It would seem, at first blush, that the timesavers are giving us less, not more, time.

Where does the time go? What's at fault here? Is it these timesavers or is it thee and me?

The automatic dishwasher certainly qualifies as a timesaver. But install a glass door in it and then sit around watching its miraculous operation and little time would be saved for higher activities. Or, suppose we used the time saved by the dishwasher to engage in affairs as dulling as the drudgery that remarkable gadget has relieved us of. Engage in additional useless things, enough to consume more time than the timesaver saves, and we would be "busier" than before—we would have less time than ever for useful pursuits.

Television is a thing of wonder. It is a step toward the unobstructed universe. It removes obstruction of both space and time. One need no longer take the time nor travel the miles to see a football game, a play, a movie, a presidential inauguration, or numerous other events. Prior to the age of TV the obstructions of space and time served to limit our entertainment indulgences. But with the substantial removal of these obstructions many of us now use the saved time to more generously gratify our craving for the lighter pastimes.

The auto and the plane are timesavers as are tens of thousands of other modern inventions. But, for what worthy pursuits is all this time saved? These inventions *could* save time for the release of our creative energies, for study, for contemplation of those higher potentialities peculiar to our individual persons. Timesavers can be employed to economize, to lessen drudgery, to free our higher selves from obstructions; or *we can use timesavers to multiply the ways we indulge ourselves*. It is a matter of personal choice. That many of us in our listening, in our talk, in our dinner parties, even in our reading,