SUCCESSFUL LIVING IN THIS MACHINE AGE

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Successful living in this machine age by Edward A. Filene

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BY

EDWARD A. FILENE

IN COLLABORATION WITH CHARLES W. WOOD



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INTRODUCTION

I HAVE long entertained a profound regard for Edward A. Filene's insight and foresight. This regard was awakened by three years of professional association with him when I saw his mind at work in office hours and after. And this regard has grown greatly in the dozen years since we were together as colleagues.

There has always been a touch of the prophet about him. And the prophetic mind is always a bit baffling alike to the pure theorist and to the pure practicalist. I have seen practical executives accuse him of being theoretical, and I have seen theoretical enthusiasts grow impatient with his insistent practicality. The peculiar strength of his mind lies in its effective correlation of theory and fact. He is a living example of the contention that comes back to me from a treatise by E. S. Brightman to the effect that "to be truly practical one must take into account all that any theory could reasonably conceive" and that "to be truly theoretical one must include every practical fact."

Until one comes to sense and see the working of his mind, his wrestling with ideas and issues seems disorderly, incoherent, and inarticulate. During my first year of association with him, I thought he wasted much valuable time, when problems were up for analysis, by exploring one futile and fruitless by-path after another. I soon discovered that every once in a while a by-path that seemed so clearly not worth exploring led straight into the road to the realization of our objective. I soon discovered that he has applied to socioeconomic thinking the method of the good diagnostician who insists on following up every symptom, however irrelevant it may seem, and by eliminating one possibility after another finally tracks the disease to its source. His mind is disorderly,