WHAT sort of work should claim our immediate attention? Everyday routine is, in itself, a very necessary form of work, and any conscientious labor has value, but there are so many complications in the world of to-day that we ought to, first of all, select the work which is of the utmost importance.

But how are we to know when a task is of the utmost importance and how prevent its being overlooked amidst the hurry of our daily routine?

In these days of upheaval such a matter is of the highest importance.

There is nothing unnecessary in everyday routine work, or it would have been long ago excluded; none the less we ought to give attention, at the same time, to the guiding principle of our times.

There is a saying, often used in the navy, 'do your best', by which every man is called upon to do his best in the way of knowledge, resourcefulness and courage.

This will have the tendency to rouse every man to a feeling of obligation and responsibility.
A command such as 'every man is expected to do his duty' is no longer personal but refers to urgent circumstances with which every man has to deal to the best of his ability.

The worker has to decide if he will act at once or wait until later. Should he decide to wait, this will also be a form of action, since he is only holding up until certain invisible circumstances have co-ordinated.

Should he decide to act, however, then he ought to go carefully and adopt the best methods. Once he has begun the fight, he should beware of useless blows, for an inexperienced fighter can damage the most precious blade.

It is not always easy to decide what task is the most urgent. Experience, however, which gives us the faculty of intuition will gradually accustom us to taking rapid decisions.

Intuition is always immediate and direct, whereas calculation is often deceptive.

He who is guided by intuition can generally discriminate even in the most complicated situation. Amidst much that seems urgent and new there is a great deal which is obsolete and superfluous.

Whoever, despite the dangers and obstacles of the way, can discern the vital issues knows what is required.

He is not surprised to know that such imperative undertakings are surrounded by the utmost dangers and obstacles, because the powers of darkness are always present where life makes its appearance.

To select what is most urgent does not mean to choose what is easiest. Only worthless Maia surround the mirages of easy attainment. In fairy tales we often hear of three paths, and the one which entails the least loss is the shortest. Where the risk is great, there the discovery is great, and, in fact, there lies the guarantee.

Perhaps you will think this is a matter for fairy tales, but even fairy tales warn us that there is a world of difference between words and deeds.

In historical narratives we generally meet with little more than symbolical hieroglyphs of achievement—panther leaps, as it were.

But the panther has to collect his whole strength before leaping and this itself is a form of activity.

Jackals accompany their movements with howling and screaming which is according to their character. From animals we
can get a glimpse of what bloodthirstiness really is, and come to see that coarseness and cruelty are things which are out of place in the new world of the future.

All worthy activity is far removed from cruelty and blood-thirstiness and is rooted in steadfastness, and in the effort to strike on new ways of life.

Even wells will dry up and time is needed for fresh moisture to gather. If the well has been bored in the right place then the water will naturally replenish itself, provided you give it time.

But, as the saying is, "Do not spit in the well, this water is for drinking".

Many foolish travellers have allowed their wells to be contaminated, never expecting to return to them again. Often enough, however, circumstances have obliged them to do so.

The moment is, of course, one of great tension. What is most needed is probably near to hand but requires the concentration of all our attention if we are to discover it.

Nature is always calm before a storm, and an experienced traveller will never mistake this calm for a sign of fine weather.

I know that it is not easy to avoid being agitated when urgent events are knocking at the door, and amidst the noise and turmoil of the present hour there is the danger that we may overlook this inner rapping.

Inwardly, and to an even greater extent outwardly, all the different strata of life are seething, and what is most urgent and needful is being dispersed in effervescence, in sparks and in splashes of light.

How are we to gauge what is best, what is most needful, and where is the measure of the great and small?

Everyone has read stories concerning people who failed to recognise what was good for them; it was only when it was too late that they began to recover their sight and tear their hair.

It is a common sight to see travellers arriving too late for the boat. The gangway has been lifted and the unfortunate traveller is left behind gesticulating amidst the fluttering handkerchiefs of the crowd that has come to see their friends off.

Perhaps it was urgent for the traveller to leave with this particular boat and he had been detained by some chance circumstance. It is in such cases that we ought to remember the saying 'act according to your ability', 'act when it is necessary', act, when it is urgent.
This threefold action—according to capacity, necessity and urgency—denotes what is essential. In such noble intensity there is the secret of what is inevitable, urgent and imperative. The younger the heart, the quicker will it respond to what is imperative.

A youthful heart, however, is not to be measured in years, for many frozen and senile hearts are found among the new born. Many hearts are so darkened by coarseness and cruelty that their hardheartedness will show itself in their daily conduct of affairs.

Even good people are sometimes hardhearted but this prevents them from realising what is essential. One-sided measures will prevent one from approaching the necessary and even after collecting all accumulations we shall still sense a certain deficiency.

To recognize the imperative supposes a certain comprehensiveness and requires that sense of synthesis which is the true sign of culture.

The task of culture will always be to outline the principal traits of what is most needful. This is just. But among the problems of culture some will require years of preparation, others immediate action. And we must know which of these requires immediate fulfilment.

Think, think, think; necessity demands intensity of thought. Only in such intense energy will the radiant fire disclose what is imperative.

Yet the outline of this severe and beautiful face does not terrify; on the contrary, it attracts the heart and arms it with new strength.

"And as the vague lines of a secret letter suddenly stand out above the flame so will a vision appear before you all at once."