

## CHAPTER I

### ORGANIZATION FOR MENTAL EFFICIENCY

MAN's response to situations in the day's work is the measure of his efficiency. When the response results in behavior which satisfies the immediate, pressing demands and, in addition, adapts itself to change, growth, and progress, efficiency is perfect. In other words, the ability of a man to react effectively to his daily problems may be gauged by his *alert, flexible adaptation to changing circumstances*. The other side of the shield, however, is more familiar—the sight of the person whose response to new conditions is unreflective adaptation influenced by the force of habit, and nothing more. We select an illustrative example from the many suggested by the present war.

"It did not seem possible that human beings could brave these haunted streets," says Owen Johnson,<sup>1</sup> speaking of Arras under bombardment; "and yet human beings were there. . . . In a broken street, where one shell had literally disembowelled a whole house, leaving only the roof hanging like a suspension bridge, whom should we happen upon but a postman delivering mail to a woman who rose cautiously from her cave. Remember, this was within fifty yards from the house which had been literally blown away. She was a sweet-faced old lady, untroubled and resigned. I asked the invariable question:

"How do you dare stay here?"

"Where would I go?" she said, with a helpless little look.

"To her, as to the rest, to leave home meant the end of all things. The outer world was something uncompre-

<sup>1</sup> *The Spirit of France*, pp. 103 f.