

THE COMING MAN....*Somerville Journal*

A pair of very chubby legs,
Encased in scarlet hose;
A pair of little stubby boots,
With rather doubtful toes;
A little kilt, a little coat—
Cut as a mother can—
And lo! before us stands in state
The future's "coming man."
His eyes, perchance, will read the stars,
And search their unknown ways;
Perchance the human heart and soul
Will open to their gaze;
Perchance their keen and flashing glance
Will be a nation's light—
Those eyes that now are wistful bent
On some "big fellow's" kite.
Those hands—those little, busy hands—
So sticky, small and brown;
Those hands whose only mission seems
To pull all order down;
Who knows what hidden strength may be
Within their tiny clasp,
Though now 'tis but a taffy stick
In sturdy hold they grasp?
Ah, blessings on those little hands,
Whose work is yet undone;
And blessings on those little feet,
Whose race is yet unrun!
And blessings on the little brain
That has not learned to plan!
Whate'er the future holds in store,
God bless the "coming man."

WHAT IS THE DURATION OF MAN'S LIFE?

We know that each class of animals has a certain expectation of life, and the case should be the same with man; he, however, is so complex a being, so strange a mixture of the mental and physical, that his life must necessarily be more variable than that of the animal or vegetable kingdom. But there is nothing to prevent us from giving as his duration of life the utmost extent to which, according to Hufeland and Heller—two great

authorities on this subject—it is possible for him to attain. "Now experience incontestably tells us that a man still may attain to considerably over a hundred years." How much he has ever exceeded that age remains to be proved. We may, however, with all probability assert that the organisation and vital powers of man are able to support an activity of one hundred years. This assertion acquires some weight when we find that it agrees with the proportion between the time of growth and the duration of life. It may be stated broadly that an animal lives eight times—the modern theory is *five times*—as long as it grows, but different classes vary so much in this respect that no absolute rule can be laid down. Now a man in a natural state—where the period of maturity is not artificially hastened—requires fully twenty-five years to attain his complete growth and full development, and this proportion would give him an absolute age of one hundred and twenty-five years; beyond even this he has been known to attain—for example, old Parr, born 1493 died 1635. It need not be objected that great age is the exception to the rule, and that a shorter life is properly the natural condition. Almost all those kinds of death which take place before the hundredth year are brought on artificially—that is to say, by disease or accidents; and it is certain that the far greater number of men die an unnatural death, and that not above one in three thousand attains an age of over a hundred years. But with regard to the relative duration of human life, that indeed is extremely variable and as different as each individual. It is regulated by the constitution of the person, his manner of living, and a thousand internal and external circumstances which may have an influence on it. We must not imagine that every man brings with him into the world a stock of vitality capable of lasting one hundred years. It is unfortunately the fate of our generation that the grandparents and parents often transmit to the embryo a far shorter "stamen vitæ."

As an instance of hereditary longevity, we may quote from the published letter of General Cunningham Roberts, who stated that his aunt, Miss Elizabeth Gray, who died in 1858 within twenty-two days of her 108th birthday, was one of a family of twenty. Of eleven who survived, two died respectively at the ages of ninety-one and ninety-two; two at eighty-seven, and two at eighty-six; three others at seventy-seven, eighty, and eighty-five respectively; and one at the comparatively early age of seventy!