

even the least appreciative of his admirers will admit that he has done some good work since 1882.

Darwin published his "Origin of Species" at fifty, and his work on moulds at seventy-two, the year before his death. John Hunter was sixty-five when he died. He rose from a meeting in St. George's Hospital and died suddenly of angina, from which he had suffered for twenty years. The last twenty years of his life were very active ones. He was fifty-seven when he made the experiment of tying the stag's carotid, and fifty-eight when he tied the femoral artery to cure a popliteal aneurism. All these added to the sum of human achievement long after they had passed the dead line of forty years old. Dr. Osler published his first medical book when he was forty years old, and Dr. George M. Gould, the accomplished editor of "American Medicine," did not enter the medical ranks until he was forty years of age. Andreas Vesalius died at fifty, thus his brilliant career was cut short, and much that he might have done has been lost to the world. His great work, however, was accomplished in his last ten years. Laennec, the distinguished physician, pathologist, anatomist and inventor of the stethoscope, died at the young age of forty-five. And after death "no man worketh."

It is difficult to try to refute by statistics of greatness or of genius that he is wrong, because when examples of the manifestation of artistic power in advanced age are cited it is open to him to answer, at least plausibly, that the exception proves the rule. In spite of the multiplication of such instances he may still be able to assert that for all practical purposes the creative activity belongs to the period before forty, even when its manifestations are delayed till after that period of life.

One rejoinder to this would be that in case of the great poets like Shakespeare, Goethe, Browning, and Tennyson—and poetry is perhaps the supreme criterion by which to test the theory—their best work was not done before forty, but after it, and that it continued to improve as to the higher qualities so long as they continued to write. No competent critic would postpone Shakespeare's "Tempest," written when he was nearly fifty, to any of his earlier productions as a work of creative genius; or prefer "Locksley Hall" to "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After." Shakespeare, greatest of all literary artists, voluntarily ceased writing at forty-nine, but there is no reason to doubt his work would have continued to improve with experience and practice if he had chosen to continue it for another twenty years of healthful life. The same statement, *mutatis mutandis*, would hold good of the great historians, the great scientists, and the great philosophers. In short, it is impossible for Dr. Osler to establish by any induction, however wide, that his theory is even presumptively sound. Longfellow when he wrote his "Morituri Salutamus," from which