

ed sixty-five or seventy years. The feeling that mental power is less than it once was not infrequently stimulates a man to increased exertions which may provoke structural changes in the brain, and will certainly accelerate the progress of any that may exist in that organ. When a man finds that a great effort is required to accomplish any mental task that was once easy, he should desist from the attempt, and regulate his work according to his power. With this limitation, it may be taken for granted that the mental faculties will be far better preserved by their exercise than by their disuse.

Somewhat different advice must be given with regard to bodily exercises in their reference to longevity. Exercise is essential to the preservation of health; inactivity is a potent cause of wasting and degeneration. The vigor and equality of the circulation, the functions of the skin, and the aëration of the blood, are all promoted by muscular activity, which thus keeps up a proper balance and relation between the important organs of the body. In youth, the vigor of the system is often so great that if one organ be sluggish another part will make amends for the deficiency by acting vicariously, and without any consequent damage to itself. In old age the tasks can not be thus shifted from one organ to another: the work allotted to each sufficiently taxes its strength, and vicarious action can not be performed without mischief. Hence the importance of maintaining, as far as possible, the equable action of all the bodily organs, so that the share of the vital processes assigned to each shall be properly accomplished. For this reason exercise is an important part of the conduct of life in old age; but discretion is absolutely necessary. An old man should discover by experience how much exercise he can take without exhausting his powers, and should be careful never to exceed the limit. Old persons are apt to forget that their staying powers are much less than they once were, and that, while a walk of two or three miles may prove easy and pleasurable, the addition of a return journey of similar length will seriously over-

tax the strength. Above all things, sudden and rapid exertion should be scrupulously avoided by persons of advanced age. The machine which might go on working for years at a gentle pace often breaks down altogether when its movements are suddenly accelerated.

Walking is a natural form of exercise and subserves many important purposes: not a few old people owe the maintenance of their health and vigor to their daily "constitutional." Riding is an excellent form of exercise, but available only by a few: the habit, if acquired in early life, should be kept up as long as possible, subject to the caution already given as to violent exercise. Old persons of both sexes fond of gardening, and so situated that they may gratify their tastes, are much to be envied. Body and mind are alike exercised by what Lord Bacon justly termed "the purest of human pleasures." Dr. Parkes goes so far as to say that light garden or agricultural work is a very good exercise for men past seventy: "It calls into play the muscles of the abdomen and back, which in old men are often but little used, and the work is so varied that no muscle is kept long in action."

With regard to food, we find from Dr. Humphry's report that ninety per cent of the aged persons were either "moderate" or "small" eaters, and such moderation is quite in accord with the teachings of physiology. In old age the changes in the bodily tissues gradually become less and less active, and less food is required to make up for the daily waste. The appetite and the power of digestion are correspondingly diminished, and although for the attainment of a great age a considerable amount of digestive power is absolutely necessary, its perfection, when exercised upon proper articles of diet, is the most important characteristic. Indulgence in the pleasures of the table is one of the common errors of advanced life, and is not infrequent in persons who, up to that period, were moderate or even small eaters. Luxuries in the way of food are apt to be regarded as rewards that have been fully earned by a life of labor, and may, therefore, be lawfully enjoyed.