

recorded as total abstainers from alcoholic drinks throughout life, or for long periods, twenty had taken very little alcohol: eight were reported as moderate in their use of it; and only three habitually indulged in it. The habit of temperance in food, good powers of digestion, and soundness of sleep are other main characteristics of most of those who attain advanced years, and may be regarded as causes of longevity. Not a few old persons are found on inquiry to take credit to themselves for their own condition, and to attribute it to some remarkable peculiarity in their habits or mode of life. It is said that Lord Mansfield, who reached the age of eighty-nine, was wont to enquire into the habits of life of all aged witnesses who appeared before him, and that only in one habit, namely, that of early rising, was there any general concurrence. Health is doubtless often promoted by early rising, but the habit is not necessarily conducive to longevity. It is, as Sir H. Holland points out, more probable that the vigor of the individuals maintains the habit than that the latter alone maintains the vitality.

Thus, to take only a few examples, the immoderate use of sugar has been regarded not only as a panacea, but as decidedly conducive to length of days. Dr. Stare, a physician of the last century, has reached the case of a centenarian who used to mix sugar with all his food, and the doctor himself was so convinced of the "balsamic virtue" of this substance that he adopted the practice, and boasted of his health and strength in his old age. Another member of the same profession used to take daily doses of tannin (the substance employed to harden and preserve leather), under the impression that the tissues of the body would be thereby protected from decay. His life was protracted beyond the ordinary span, but it is questionable whether the tannin acted in the desired direction.

The whole term of life may be divided into the three main periods; of growth and development, of maturity, and of decline. No hard and fast line can be drawn between these two latter phases of

existence: the one should pass gradually into the other until the entire picture is changed. Diminished conservative power and the consequent triumph of disintegrating forces are the prominent features of the third period, which begins at different times in different individuals, its advent being mainly controlled by the general course of the preceding years. The "turning period," also known as the "climacteric" or "middle age," lies between forty-five and sixty; the period may be considered as belonging to advanced life.

"In order to prolong life and at the same time to enjoy it, occupation of some kind is absolutely necessary: it is a great mistake to suppose that idleness is conducive to longevity." With regard to mental activity, there is abundant evidence that the more the intellectual faculties are exercised the greater the probability of their lasting. They often become stronger after the vital force has passed its culminating point; and this retention of mental power is the true compensation for the decline in bodily strength. Did space permit, many illustrations could be adduced to show that the power of the mind can be preserved almost unimpaired to the most advanced age. Even memory, the failure of which is sometimes regarded as a necessary concomitant of old age, is not infrequently preserved almost up to the end of life. All persons of middle age should take special pains to keep the faculties and energies of the mind in a vigorous condition: they should not simply drift on in a hap-hazard fashion, but should seek and find pleasure in the attainment of definite objects. Even if the mind has not been especially cultivated, or received any decided bend, there is at the present day no lack of subjects on which it can be agreeably and profitably exercised. The possession of some reasonable hobby is a great advantage in old age, and there are many pursuits of this character besides those connected with literature and science.

Whatever be the sphere of mental activity, no kind of strain must be put upon the mind by a person who has reach-