

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWSTHE WORLD'S DEBT TO ITS OLD
MEN

In one of his most terribly realistic poems, Kipling represents the old men as sitting in the chimney-corner sucking their gums and thinking well of everything they do. But there is something far different from this role for the world's elderly men. Mr. John F. Cargill thinks that the important uses of society of the period of old age have been convincingly demonstrated by Professor N. S. Slater, of Harvard. Professor Shaler, we are assured, has shown how the presence of three or four generations in a single social edifice gives to it far more value than is afforded by one or two. While the elders may contribute little or nothing to the direct profit of the association, they serve to unite the life of the community and bridge the gap between the successive generations. We quote further from Mr. Cargill's article in *The Popular Science Monthly*:

Professor Shaler shows that the average man up to the age of perhaps fifty has little or no time for calm reflection; that the necessities of existence demand that he pursue the gainful life, which is always more or less strenuous. Whatever possible period there may be before the individual to pursue the intellectual life must come afterward. And it does come. Is it necessary to argue that the world needs the assistance of the calm reflective mind? Remove this possibility, and mankind may never be able to learn whether life has either meaning or value—in the larger sense.

"Recurring wars, he says, repetitions of political follies and the successions of commercial disasters, all show the need of adding in every possible way to the strength of the bond between generations, so that the life of society may gain a large unit of the action that is afforded by the experience of most of its active members. If the deeds of any single period could be the result of the experience of three or four generations of experienced men, rather than that of one, civilization would be an immense gainer. There would be fewer recitals of failure, fewer reversions toward savagery. This necessity is made evident, he says, because, notwithstanding the resources of our printed records, they convey only imperfectly the quality of one time to that which succeeds it. The real presence of the generations is necessary to the greatest extent that can be had.

He says that the idea of the apparent uselessness of man in advanced years is a survival from the time when a man's value in warfare was the paramount consideration; and he adds, "The generation which has seen an aged Gladstone guide an empire; a von Moltke at the three score limit beat down France; and a Bismarck at more than three score readjust the Powers of Europe, has naturally enough given up the notion that a seat by the chimney-side is the only place for the elders."

But it is in the indebtedness of science to men of advanced years that the truth of the whole proposition as to the value of old age is most strikingly demonstrated. One can specify no field in all the domain of science, Mr. Cargill contends, including astronomy, geology, biology, psychology, sociology, electro-magnetism, electricity, engineering, invention, mathematics or medicine, that does not owe much to men of advanced years. This statement holds good, we are told, of the fields of mechanics, philosophy, statesmanship and many others. We quote again:

"A noteworthy beginning may be made with the five great savants who, within the hundred years just passed, have given to mankind entirely new concepts, new understandings of the universe and of life; have revolutionized the greater sciences and made it necessary to build anew from the beginning. We will take them in chronological order. Immanuel Kant died in 1804 at the age of seventy-six. His *Kritik (Critique of Pure Reason)* was written or appeared after he had reached fifty-seven; a work of such vast comprehensiveness, such subtle, active and far-reaching intellectual resourcefulness that the world has produced but a handful of men since his day who could fully appreciate or appraise him. His 'Contest of the Faculties' appeared when he passed seventy. His primary formulation of the nebular hypothesis was when he was in the thirties; but much of its elaboration was concluded many years afterward. Pierre de Laplace, his conditor in the hypothesis which shook the world, died in 1827 at the age of seventy-eight. Laplace issued the earlier portion of his great 'Exposition du système du monde' at about the age of fifty; and the completion of this monumental work containing the nebular hypothesis was not published until he was past seventy years."

The next great step forward in enlightenment, Mr. Cargill now notes, is from the field of astronomy to that of geology, and here we come to Sir Charles Lyell, who died in 1875 at the age of seventy-eight:

"The most important portions of Lyell's work were done after he had passed forty years; complete and sweeping revisions and enlargements of his earlier work were done late in life, and even down to within three days before his death, at the age of seventy-eight years, he finished a revision of his 'Principles of Geology,' a work which amazed and electrified scientists of all nations, and remains to-day the unchallenged great text-book in that field. Lyell's is the broadest and best-balanced mind which has dealt with deepening geological problems. In effect, he may be said to have created the science of geology. His work marked the second epoch in the thought of mankind, supplying the needed second link in the chain of evidence of planetary evolution. He applied in geology the principle of gradual development to the earth's crust, which Laplace and Kant had previously wrought in astronomy concerning sun systems and planets; which Darwin accomplished afterward in biology for living forms and organic life, and Spencer achieved for psychology in human consciousness and thought, and for sociology in human society and government."

The "fuller amplification" of Lyell's work, Mr. Cargill significantly notes, in addition, was achieved after the famed scientist had passed the age of sixty:

"With Lyell's work planetary evolution came to be recognized as a definite truth; and then came Charles Darwin. Darwin was born in 1809, and lived until the age of seventy-three. His lifelong habits of thought, and his methods of research are too well known to be repeated, but it may be said that up to the age of forty-nine years he devoted himself almost wholly to accumulating stores of experience and observation, and to the planning of the great work which was to come afterward. 'The Origin of Species,' written at the age of fifty, sounded the farthest depth of biological knowledge and created such a whirlwind of controversy as no other book has done. His 'Descent of Man,'

written at the age of sixty-two, was not less remarkable, and had an effect almost as widespread and profound. No man then living, either young or old, had the preparation, patience in the working out of details, breadth of mind, modesty or the honest simplicity of character, necessary to the carrying out of his tremendous task. Darwin may not have created the science of biology, but unmistakably he brought it out of a vague, confusing and conflicting state, reduced the mass of evidence and details to concrete form, and made it into an orderly and perfect system."

We now come to the "latest of this remarkable group of investigators," Herbert Spencer, who was eighty-three when he died:

"Spencer's mind did not begin its functions until he was well on into the forties. He was storing up until then—his mind was incubating, as it were. At forty he had made merely a rough outline or program of his 'Synthetic Philosophy,' which massive work he was to carry out triumphantly in his riper and broader years. 'First Principles,' the first work in the series, was finished when he was forty-two years old; 'Principles of Psychology' when he was fifty-two; 'Principles of Sociology' when he was fifty-six and one of the greatest in his ethics series, 'Justice,' came at the age of seventy-one. He was close upon eighty when his monumental 'Synthetic Philosophy' was completed, and the person had not yet appeared who has discovered and dimmed of his powers from the earlier work to the last page of the final volume."

YOUNG GIRLS TAUGHT POLY-
AMY.

Continuing her articles on "The Tragedy of the Mormon Woman" in the September Hous-keeper, Marian Bonsall writes:

I remarked to a woman, a Mormon woman, not an orthodox member of the church, it is true, but nevertheless a member, on the sweetness and freshness of her daughter, a young woman. The mother looked lovingly upon her daughter, fair and straight and slender, who was then engaged in animated jest with a group of young Mormon college students. Great tears filled her eyes, and she turned to me and said: "And you know that she has grown up amid all this!" I knew what "this" meant, for the woman was the first wife of a man who deserted her to live entirely with a plural wife. In a later installment I am going to tell you the history of this noble woman.

It is absolutely true that even the very young girls around fourteen and fifteen years of age, are frequently addressed by their religious teachers and by prominent church women in the meetings of the Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, on the righteousness and necessity of plural marriage; taught, furthermore, in the most bald and uncompromising manner.

Mrs. Susa Young Gates, a daughter of Brigham Young, who is one of the most intelligent women in the Mormon church and is well known as a lecturer in the East, said, in addressing a conference of the association only a few years ago: "Girls, do not forget polygamy; you cannot practice it now, but keep it alive in your hearts. Remember there are four girls to every boy in Utah." It is well known that the census at the time showed only a very small excess. Mrs. Young's defense of polygamy is always apt to assume an illogical turn.

The most popular author in Russia is John Milton, whose "Paradise Lost" is read in every peasant's cottage.