

That so complicated a machine as the human body, so delicate in its mechanism, and so exquisitely formed in all its parts, should continue for years to perform its various functions, even under the most prudent conduct, is not a little surprising; but that it should do so to an advanced period under all the rude shocks it meets with, is still more truly miraculous. But all the long livers did not pursue one uniform course of life, for some of the most noted ones were frequently guilty of great irregularities in their manner of living.

However, let not this encourage the thought that excesses of any kind can go hand and hand with longevity.

On the whole it may be said, that all extremes are unfavourable to long life. Excessive heat enervates the body, extreme cold renders it torpid; sloth and inactivity clog the mechanism of the human machine, while incessant labour soon wears it out. On the other hand, a temperate climate, moderate exercise, pure country air and strict temperance, together with a prudent regulation of the passions, will prove to be the most efficient means of extending life to its utmost limits. And so, it may be explained, why the cultivation of philosophy, music and the fine arts, all of which manifestly tend to humanize the soul and calm the ruder passions, are so highly conducive to longevity.