

persons were under 40; (3) that there are countless examples of great books having been written, poems composed, canvasses painted, and discoveries made by men long after they had passed their fortieth, or even their sixtieth year. It is therefore contrary to the records of history and the teachings of science that men should practically do no writing till they are 40, or cease writing when they become 60. No arbitrary age limits can be laid down to determine the productiveness of the mind.

There is another point where the case against old men appears to break down. It may be asked: Are there fewer eminent old men relatively to their numbers than young men on the same test? This question may be answered confidently in the negative. The men from 60 to 75 yield a larger percentage of men of talent who take a prominent place in the affairs of the world than do those between 25 and 40.

There are marked differences as to the age at which people attain their mental development. Gladstone, Carlyle, Weierstrass, are instances of the highest types of mental development coming late. They ripened slowly, but remained at their prime a long time. The meaning of this is plain. Some men are at their best at thirty, some at forty, some at fifty, some at sixty and over. And it is not hard to find a reason for this. The laws of heredity and the environments of any person make for great differences in his vigor, development and longevity. Social conditions also play an important role in a man's life-history. Furthermore, we must not forget the remarkable influence of opportunity or circumstances. The country churchyard may contain mute Miltons and unknown Cromwells. Oyama's day came because of Russia's wrongful aggressiveness. So in the world of arts, sciences and letters the finest fruits may not be borne until late in the autumn, because, figuratively, of an unfavorable spring and summer.

#### IV.—PRACTICALLY CONSIDERED.

There is one aspect of Dr. Osler's address that merits attention and praise, namely, the credit he gives young men for what they are doing and the encouragement thrown out by him to inspire them to even greater achievements. He has always been pre-eminently the young man's friend, and has done much to discover and bring forward many a bright young man. In this regard Dr. Osler's work will remain a precious legacy long after he is gone. A man's influence over others is sometimes of far greater moment than anything he may actually do himself, as in the cases of Thomas Arnold and Edward Thring.

With regard to old men, however, the case is different. There are hundreds of thousands of men in America at and beyond the sixty year period who are still in active life and forced to remain there by inexorable circumstances. Many of them have to fight to keep their place in the