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EDITORIAL

PREMATURE OLD AGE.

If one takes the trouble to study the mortality statistics of countries and insurance companies, several interesting facts reveal themselves. One of these is that the death rate is very materially lower among the younger ages than it was twenty and thirty years ago. This is due to a number of causes, and among these we might mention shorter hours of labor, more sanitary conditions in workshops, better food, housing and clothing, and the reduction of infectious diseases.

But as the death rate is lowered among the young, a larger number live on to more advanced ages; and this has the effect of bringing about a larger number of deaths among the latter. There is, however, a distinct tendency for the death rate about the age of 60 and after to rise considerably higher than it was some decades ago.

This has been explained as due to the more strenuous life people live, leading to many forms of degenerative diseases. This is shown by the increasing mortality among the old due to chronic heart and arterial diseases, to kidney diseases of some form, and to nervous breakdown.

The very strenuous life so many lead gives rise to high blood pressure and all its evil consequences. It tends to derange the activities of important glands like the thyroid. It induces the habits of indulging in stimulating foods and drinks to keep up the wear and tear, and so overload the system with waste products. All these processes react on the delicate human mechanism, and some part begins to give way. Truly the get-rich-quick custom of modern times is yielding more serious results than those arising from the doubtful investments that are a feature of the same state of affairs.

How is all this to be avoided? First of all, some attention should be paid to this in all our stages of education—common school, high school, and college. It should be made clear to all that the human body should not be over-taxed. It should be shown that over-taxing the