

are higher than the intellect. There are some of us who think it a higher intellectual function to make the best possible use of recorded observations than to do actual laboratory work. From this point of view and from that of their tendency to discourage middle-aged men, we think that some of his remarks are to be regretted.

It is a well-known fact that the mind and the body do not always develop simultaneously. Nestor complained that the gods do not bestow the wisdom of years until they have withdrawn the vigor of youth. Along this line there are so many exceptions, however, that in a hundred examples, probably 45 would contradict the evidence offered by the other 55. We can well imagine some one urging that 51 per cent. constitutes a rule, and that 49 per cent. must be reckoned as an exception. Failing to dislodge him from this position, we might be obliged to admit that 51 out of every hundred men are declining at 40 and becoming of reduced economical use at 60.

The study of history bears out the statement that a large majority of those who become geniuses at a young age also die young; whereas those who develop their intellectual powers later in life will live to much greater ages. The early flame soon exhausts itself and becomes extinguished; but the later fire and slower to kindle, burns far on into the night.

But Dr. Osler's views are not new. More than seventy years ago similar opinions were expressed by Dr. James Johnston, physician to King William IV. in his book on "The Stream of Human Life." Then, again, we have D'Israeli in Coningsby praising many who became geniuses at young ages. The genius, however, is one thing, and the steady, hardworking student till 25 or the methodical investigator till 40, is quite another. The genius is a law unto himself; he is an originator, a creator, and not a student or an observer, in the ordinary sense. We contend also that the views we are combating are radically wrong in some important respects. Had Shelley, Keats, Chatterton, Byron, Burns, McCheyne, Bichat, Laennec, Clifford, Stevenson, and a host of others, not written before they were 40, they would never have written at all, and their epoch-making, vitalizing discoveries and creations of thought would have been wholly lost to the world. Then, again, it is not necessary to wait till 40 before one writes. Great writings have been given to the world before that age, as we know from a study of the lives of the men already referred to. It would appear that the following statements may be accepted as true. (1) that genius owes its greatness less to study and observation than to a peculiar insight; (2) that great books, paintings, inventions, and discoveries, have been the work of men under 40, which would have been lost had they not been published while these