

the very highest class that was ever, in any age or country, produced by a man under thirty-five. Whatsoever powers a youth may have received from nature, it is impossible that his taste and judgment can be ripe, that his mind can be richly stored with images, that he can have observed the vicissitude of life, that he can have studied the nicer shades of character. On the whole, I believe that I may, without fear of contradiction, affirm this, that of the good books now extant in the world more than nineteen-twentieths were published after the writers had attained the age of forty."

The *British Medical Journal* of recent date editorially remarks: "Professor Osler's statement that all the best intellectual work is done by men under forty is not by any means borne out by facts. To Dr. Osler's dogmatic assertion we oppose the above equally positive statement by Macaulay, an oracle of at least equal authority. This is in accord with the fact—which can scarcely be denied except by those who love paradox more than sober truth—that the intellectual powers do not reach the stable equilibrium of full and harmonious development till the age of forty or even later."

Victor Hugo, no mean mind, said that "Forty was the old age of youth and fifty the youth of old age."

The *Medical Age* makes the following comment on the matter: "If Professor Osler cannot give us a 'de Senectute' gospel more elevating than that which would decree the old man's insufficiency to be measured by Dr. Osler's conceptions of utility, he had better not have delivered his message."

While making the above quotations I am not forgetful of the fact that Goethe said we get no new ideas after forty, and that Vierordt says the brain attains its maximum weight at twenty. But it should be borne in mind that Goethe's whole life disproved his own theory, and that there is a vast difference between brain weight and brain development.

III.—SCIENTIFICALLY CONSIDERED.

It must, of course, be conceded to Dr. Osler that as no one can live on indefinitely, a period of decline of intellectual and artistic power must sooner or later set in. His error is in fixing the meridian of creative life too early. If he will give this matter more attention from the pathological standpoint, and cease to depend on statistics which may appear to prove anything while establishing nothing, he will probably add ten or even twenty years to the span of creative activity; he may even see cause to prolong it to the proverbial threescore and ten. It is not safe to set definite limits to the capacity for development. That of the mind may go on long after the body has