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## A LONG LIFE AND A MERRY ONE.

IT is not merely *length* of life that is meant when the question of prolonging life is discussed. It is not merely length of days that is commonly, or that should be, aimed at when one uses means to prevent disease, early decay and premature death. Hygienic measures are recommended and practiced largely, if not chiefly, with the view of making the latter days,—the “old age,” free from disease and suffering, and happy and useful, instead of, as is too often the case, even at sixty odd, decrepit and miserable, childish and troublesome to relatives and friends.

So many appear to have strangely erroneous views relative to the objects of public and individual hygienic efforts that it seems desirable to endeavour to set them right. We often hear persons say, “Give me a short life and a merry one;” or, “I do not want to live to be old and a trouble to my friends.” It is quite possible, indeed natural enough and not difficult, to live a “long life and a merry one” (which surely is better than a short merry period), and on to the end of a hundred years, and not be any trouble to friends, but on the other hand, a comfort and help to the younger and less experienced in life.

We need not think back to Parr or Cornaro, or to the hermit, St. Paul, or Cardinal De Falis, who lived long ago and were happy and useful long after the age of one hundred years; nor of Messonier, Montifloere, Chevrueil, Kossuth, Newman, Whittier and Bancroft, recently dead; but of Tennyson, Gladstone, Von Moltke, De Lesseps, Pope Leo, Dr. O. W. Holmes, Marshal McMahan, and, near home, of Father Dawson, and, last but by no means least, of Sir John A. Macdonald. True, the last named is not yet a very old man,

but hundreds of deaths are every year in Ontario recorded as from “old age” of persons less than seventy years old. A man should be ashamed to have lived such a life as to die of *old age* before reaching at least his eightieth year, except it were under peculiar circumstances of heredity or environment. Or think, on the other hand, of the late Secretary Windom or Gen’ls. Sherman and Grant, or of some members of the late Canadian parliament, who sadly dropped out of the race just when they had become most useful to their fellow men.

If life is worth living at all, surely it is worth more after we have lived through seventy years of usefulness and experience, and have children with their children and grand children around us, and perhaps have then too acquired the means of living an easy life for a quarter of a century, doing good to others, and ending it with a happy euthanasia.

If a man of sixty years or over, perhaps with unsound heart or cerebral arteries, will indulge at a banquet and then make a long speech, or seek exciting pleasures or business as he might safely do at thirty or forty, he is about as unwise as the man who strikes a match in a powder magazine, and it need not surprise any one if he suddenly go over into eternity. Or, who even while young

“Riots with pleasure by night and by day  
Must expect that, in time, there’ll be something to pay.”

But if with a very indiscreet life one chances to live to be forty or fifty or even more, one may even then by great care prolong life to one hundred years, but it will require much greater care than if one had began at a much earlier period.