

40. From 54 to 61 he gave to us many of his landscapes such as The Southern Coast, the Rivers of England and Wales, the Rivers of France. From 58 to 70 he produced his Venetian paintings, including the Bridge of Sighs, Venice, Canaletti, the Approach to Venice, Going to the Ball. Sir Joshua Reynolds is another artist of first rank. He died at the age of 69. Among some of his finest paintings may be mentioned Mrs. Nesbitt as Circe at 58, Mrs. Siddons as Tragic Muse at 61, The Duchess of Devonshire and Child at 63, and the Infant Hercules at 65. Sir Edwin Landsear painted his Kind Star at 57, the Flood in the Highlands at 58, Man Proposes at 62, and The Sea Eagles at 67. He died at 71. Sir John E. Millais is another man whose brush worked till its master was near the end of his wonderful career at the age of 67. He painted his famous Gladstone when he was 61 and did some fine paintings after he was 63. Van Dyck and Hans Holbein were young geniuses. The former died at 42 and the latter at 46. But because they have left many masterpieces of art, painted while they were young, that is no reason for supposing they would not have become much greater had they lived longer.

But why extend the list of names? Such works as the Encyclopedia Britannica, Dictionaries of Biography, "The English Men of Letters" series, "The Eminent Statesmen" series, Plutarch's Lives, etc., etc., yield not hundreds but thousands of instances of men at fifty, sixty, seventy, and even eighty, performing great tasks and doing splendid work.

I have examined somewhat carefully the achievements of about 500 distinguished poets, historians, critics, mathematicians, scientists, explorers, warriors, statesmen, inventors, creators of many countries and of different periods from the dawn of history down to the present, and find that about seventy-five per cent. of their best work was given to the world after forty years of age. In coming to this conclusion I take it that the mental operations of Galileo, Brahe and Kepler on the laws of astronomy, of Kant in writing his Kritik, of Smith in composing his Wealth of Nations, of Wellington at Waterloo, of Kelvin in laying the Atlantic Cable, of Roberts in South Africa, of Salisbury as Premier of Britain, of Darwin formulating the origin of species, of Pasteur in his laboratory, of Lister preaching antiseptic surgery, of Treves at the bedside of the King, of Lincoln guiding the affairs of his country, of Grant at Appomattox, are not less important or valuable than their studies and trainings which laid the foundation for these achievements; and I think the consensus of opinion is with me.