

change, but all this is quite compatible with increasing excellence of artistic product till a period of life far beyond the limit arbitrarily and hurtfully set by Dr. Osler.

The truth probably is that whatever decay in creative power becomes a noticeable concomitant of advancing age is due not to the advance of age so much as to wrong habits of life. Dr. Osler, as a pathologist, knows perfectly well that the vast majority of people, even those who think themselves all right, are in a pathological, not a physiological condition. So long as they injure themselves by over-indulgence in eating, drinking, sleeping and the use of stimulants and narcotics, it is mischievously unfair to attribute to the infirmity of age the decay that is really due to suicidal practices. The wonder in regard to most persons should be not that they survive with decaying power, but that they survive at all. For those who persist in living to eat, drinking to joy, sleeping to enervate and using whiskey or tobacco to exhilarate or neutralize curtailment of creative power is inevitable at any age, and if the impairment becomes more noticeable after the meridian of life is past, that is largely because the mischievous habits have been longer practised. Some constitutions can stand more bad treatment than others, but none can escape a check in development, even though loss of power may not be positively predicable.

Dr. Osler is much too careful a scientist to seriously pretend that age is the true measure of existence. The standard is arbitrary and, to group men according to the number of years they have been in the world is no more scientific than to group them according to their weight, or their height, or to reckon the world's progress by centuries. Doctors themselves discovered this long ago, and set up the arterial standard. "Man is as old as his arteries," they said. In our everyday wisdom we have the proverb, "A man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks." We hear much about "young old men," and "old young men," paradoxes well understood. Dr. Osler is aware of this, and also of the famous poetical passage which tells us that life is not measured by years, but by deeds, and thoughts, and aspirations. This is sound science and good poetry.

But it seems to us that the radical fallacy of Dr. Osler's doctrine is shown by something that he looks upon as confirming it. He holds that up to the age of forty a man should devote himself to acquiring knowledge as to matters of fact, and that not until after that age should he attempt to generalize. Observation, then according to him, is the proper pursuit of a man at the height of his powers, while deduction is allowable only when he has begun to degenerate; in other words, the acquisition of knowledge calls for mental powers superior to those that suffice for systematizing that knowledge and employing it as a basis for teaching and for the formation of theories. The senses, in other words,