SEVENTY YEARS YOUNG

Seventy Years Young

or

The Unhabitual Way

By

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"It is better to be seventy years young than forty years old."
—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

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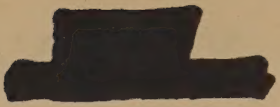

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FOREWORD

Psychology teaches that "the antecedent step to getting a thing done is to suggest it forcibly, or, in everyday parlance, 'to put it into his head.'"* The purpose of this book is "to put it into the heads" of its readers that they can add (1) life to their years and (2) years to their life.

The suggestions given herein are addressed quite as much to those who are still young in years as to those who have lived two or more score of years. There inevitably comes a time, sooner or later, when every one is personally interested in not growing old; and the earlier in life that one's attention is directed

* Halleck's "Education of the Nervous System."

to rational ways of postponing oldness, the better for the individual.

The idea that the writer has tried to present, simply and practically, is that man's responses and reactions to life are virtually within his own control; that the quality and number of his responses and reactions determine, to a large degree, his oldness or youngness.

Frequent references to the interrelation of mind and body have been made. It is earnestly hoped that no one may confound the statements regarding this interrelation with transcendental theories or unsubstantiated metaphysical dogmas. Care has been exercised that only such statements should be made as are warranted by recent physiological and psychological research and demonstration.

"All men would live long, but no one desires to be old."—*Swift.*

"The creed of the street is, Old Age is not disgraceful, but immensely disadvantageous."—*Emerson.*

I

OLD-AGE BUGABOOS

No sane person desires to be old. Some philosophic make-believers may declare that "they are looking forward to a good old age," or that "they do not mind being old." Such declaration is only a gracious bowing to what they believe to be the inevitable. But is old age at a certain year-period inevitable? May not the venerable belief that it is, be one of those "false beliefs decked in truth's garb which tangle and entwine mankind with error"? May we not be tangled and entwined in error of mistaking old-age bugaboos for old age?

Before seeking ways and means to the attainment of Seventy Years Young, let us,

first of all, distinguish between organic old age and some of the most prevalent of these old-age bugaboos.

The worst hobgoblin of all is years. Years, the mere arbitrary measurement of time! In themselves they are nothing—intangible, imponderable, invisible. And yet who entirely escapes their paralyzing influence? They have literally terrorized many a victim into premature oldness of mind and body. Every city and town have their quota of old men who gave up business and dropped all active interests while yet capable and vigorous, who, with pathetic acquiescence, allowed themselves to be relegated to Old-Agedom, simply because the years had made a certain tally against them. The attitude of adult children toward their parents is not infrequently one of gross injustice, solely because of an erroneous estimate of the weight of years. When their parents reach the age of about sixty, some children, from a sense of duty or because of loving solicitude, assume the attitude of guardians toward them. "Father" or

" Mother " is then considered too old to have good judgment in business affairs or to bear responsibilities and, sometimes, even to know what he or she wants to wear, eat or say.

Judging by our fear of years and our subservience to them, it would seem as if they have some occult control over our lives against which it is useless to struggle. For an allotted period—during youth and early maturity—the nature of this control is gracious, but, at a certain prescribed date, it becomes strangely malevolent. Did such fatalistic power inhere in years, we might well pray to die young; but, fortunately, it does not.

True, our birthdays recur with unfailing persistency and the years accumulate on every one's record with never a slip—seven, seventeen, seven times seven, seventy—but birthdays at worst can only indicate traditional old age; they have no power to induce organic old age—the only real oldness.

Is a man daunted by the new days, new years, new joys and new experiences which

the future holds for him when he says, "I dread to be old"? No. The act of living attracts us involuntarily. We do not dread to live; we desire to live. Love of life lies in what to-morrow promises quite as much as in what to-day is. Dread of age is dread of certain untoward mental and physical conditions which usually, but not necessarily, accompany accumulated years.

Other old-age bugaboos that stare from our mirrors and affright us are gray hair, expression-molded features and lines on the face. These physical incidents in themselves do not even denote that a goodly number of years have passed over one's head, much less do they denote organic oldness. A severe shock to the nervous system may turn one's hair white in a single night. Sometimes without any discernible cause the hair turns gray before a person is out of his teens. Lines on the face are the record of mental stress and struggle; anxiety, grief, worry, irritability, self-depreciation, and even intense thought lead to the contraction of the muscles which

causes wrinkles. Tennyson is scientific as well as poetic when he speaks of the " straightened forehead of the fool." The features are molded and informed not by years, but by experience and emotion. Sometimes the work of these invisible artists is beautifying, sometimes disfiguring; sometimes they work swiftly, again they dally and idle for long periods.

When a man pulls himself together and, rising from his chair with an effort, says, " I feel pretty old to-day "; he does not mean that he realizes there is an additional line or a new carving on his face, or that his hair has taken on a grayer tinge. Rather, he is conscious of lowered vitality, or loss of elasticity, or of the absence of the lightness of spirit which gave zest to his young days.

Another old-age bugaboo—a very minor one—that sometimes intimidates the inexperienced, is experience. Wisdom seems old to the callow youth, but this bugaboo is the merest wraith imaginable; a moment's thought dispels it. We all know that oldness

is not necessarily concomitant with extensive knowledge and varied experience. Measured in thought and feeling, in accomplishment, in travel and acquaintance with different nations and different phases of life, some people live more in the first thirty years of their lives than some whole families live in several generations.

Other old-age bugaboos—literally "mere figments of the mind"—are pessimistic theories concerning life: such, for instance, as Max Nordau's, where the genius, the criminal and the foolish are alike theorized into degeneracy. Without doubt, pessimism inoculates not a few susceptible people with the mental virus of old age. The effect of mental contagion plus personal timidity is seen in the prevalent subservience to social opinion. For a man to celebrate his fiftieth or even his fortieth birthday by acting as young as he feels—if he be blest with a good liver and a sense of humor—for him to be just himself in outward expression without conventional reserve or hypocrisy or affectation, requires a

degree of individuality to which only a comparatively small number of persons have yet attained.

How often an old-appearing person declares, "I'm just as young in my heart as I ever was!" Why, then, does not he or she live up to such youthfulness of heart? Generally, there is no real obstacle to hinder. The obstacle that seems insurmountable to all save those who have seen "The Gleam" is, as Edward Bellamy puts it, "the blinding, binding influence of conventionality, tradition and prejudice."

Madame Grundy might point the finger of ridicule at any who dared to disregard the Take Notice sign that reads, "Conform to Custom." The majority of people are unconsciously afraid of what this satiric old lady might say should they venture from conventional moorings. There is, in reality, no valid reason for such deferential timidity. Madame Grundy is now, as she was when the playwright, Morton, created her, over a century ago, an arbitress of social destinies who

herself never appears on the stage. It was Dame Ashfield's projected imagination that first made, "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" a matter of importance; and it is our projected imagination and our cowardice that enthrone her to-day. Her sway is wholly dependent upon the homage paid to her by individuals. As soon as a person ceases to cower and cringe, her power over his life ceases. Moreover, let a person make a declaration of independence, act for himself and succeed, then Madame Grundy and all her train will hasten to pay him the high compliment of imitation. No other cause would they espouse more heartily than that of successful venture in the art of postponing oldness.

Let us, then, put by the "garments of make-believe." Let us have done with self-deceptions and slavery to bugaboos. Let us rid ourselves of useless fears and agonies of spirit, and without prejudice seek to find a way to postpone the advent of *organic old age* than which nothing is more undesired and unlovely.

"I met a man the other day who owned to seven-and-seventy-years, and such was his boyishness, that I was almost surprised into feeling old myself, in comparison with him. In short, my young friends, this whole affair of old age, about which you hear so much talk, is a canard and a humbug. . . . Fools, and persons who take themselves seriously, are aged at forty; but so are they at any time. We need not consider them. Old age, in plain words, is a defect—a piece of moral or intellectual obliquity—and its source is to be sought, not in years, but in the temperament and character, congenital and acquired, of the individual."—*Julian Hawthorne.*

"Cling to your youth. It is the artist's stock in trade. Don't give up that you are aging and you won't age."—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*

II

THE TENDENCY OF THE TIMES

In all reforms a few path-blazers lead the way and show the possibilities. The conservative, the doubting, the timid, and those of little faith hang back until the path becomes an accepted thoroughfare; then they gradually try walking in it.

The reform in the conduct of personal life which shall render people young at seventy, instead of old at forty, will prove no exception to the general rule. Some sturdy pioneers have already taken up and proven claims to prolonged youngness. By their accomplishment, they have established a precedent and made valuable records. Those of us who

have sufficient individuality to do so can follow their lead and substantiate like claims.

That those conditions which mark a man as in his prime are occasionally maintained long beyond the date that old age customarily brands its victims, cannot be denied by even the most skeptical conservative. Among those whose lives attest this possible retention of mental and physical power are Goethe, who was a "great child"—not childish but childlike—at eighty-three; Tennyson writing the immortal lines, "Crossing the Bar," when he was past eighty; Thiers, the French republic's Washington, proving his country's savior when he was over four-score years wise; Chevreul, the French chemist, who was a vigorous worker until his death at one hundred and three years; John Wesley, who was "top-full of vigor" until his death at eighty-six, and who said, when he was eighty-two, "I am a wonder to myself. It is now twelve years since I have felt any such sensation as fatigue"; Pope Leo XIII., "elected to the Roman seat at seventy and making his will

felt in every nook and corner of the civilized world for a quarter of a century thereafter"; Mrs. Gilbert, cheerily playing a leading rôle on the metropolitan stage until, at eighty-five, death loosed the harness; Cooper, the English artist, who exhibited at the Royal Academy for sixty-seven consecutive years, and of whose pictures, presented when he was ninety-seven, the critics said, "they show the painter's mastery and the unimpaired virility of his brush"; Julia Ward Howe and Susan B. Anthony, addressing large audiences on reform measures after more than eighty years of life experience. Miss Anthony said, when she was eighty-five years young: "Before I leave home (Rochester, N. Y.) for the Portland Fair, I must arrange the birthday surprise party for an old lady who lives near me. She's ninety-four."

Longevity, in and of itself, is by no means always desirable. Life may become only a kind of vegetative existence, *sans* vigor, *sans* feeling, *sans* intelligence. The foregoing records are not. however, merely records of

longevity. They are records of the retention of power, of mental and physical activity, and of a live participation in the vital interests of the day.

The lists of those who have given personal demonstration of essential youngness at seventy and more years of age might be multiplied, such is the abundance of data. The current press frequently contains such paragraphs as:—

"Harper and Brothers announce the seventieth edition of 'The Mechanics and Engineers' Pocket Book,' by Charles H. Haswell. Mr. Haswell has passed his ninety-fifth birthday. He is, however, still in active life, carries himself erect, dresses most fastidiously, and usually wears a carnation in his buttonhole."

"Mrs. Frances Alexander is in her ninety-third year and has just translated from the Italian more than one hundred and twenty miracle stories, which are published by Messrs. Little, Brown and Company."

"Miss Florence Nightingale celebrated

her eighty-fourth birthday last month. Her life has been one of continued effort, mental and physical. Up to the present day she has been constantly at work."

"Mrs. Freeman, of Redbank, Pa., who was born October 4, 1793, is, indeed, a remarkable old lady. . . . We found Mrs. Freeman and her eighty-two years' old son about a quarter of a mile from their house. To attain to the extreme age of one hundred and twelve years and still retain one's mental faculties and physical vigor is an achievement that falls to the lot of very few. Mrs. Freeman's sight is good and she does not use glasses. Every day, except in extremes of weather, she may be seen trudging about the hillsides near her home. In summer she spades and tills a good-sized garden."

This ever increasing amount of irrefutable evidence which proves that physical and mental vigor can be retained to the ninth and tenth decade of life is, doubtless, partly the cause of the noticeable change that has taken place in public sentiment regarding age

boundaries. Certain it is, that during the last few years public sentiment has been growing decidedly in favor of extending these boundaries.

Thirty years ago, nearly all novelists pictured their heroines as specimens of "budding womanhood." They gave sixteen and eighteen years as the prime of feminine attractiveness. If one of their women characters were not married by the time that she was twenty-one or, at latest, twenty-three, she virtually was laid upon the matrimonial table with never an advocate to offer a resolution for her further consideration.

Formerly, in real life, an unmarried girl twenty-five years of age received the unhonorary degree of "Old Maid." Popularly interpreted, this meant old and unlovable at twenty-five—too old to hope ever to awaken love in the heart of any man.

In recent works of fiction, the heroine in her teens has become almost obsolete. In her stead appear girls and women of widely differing ages; the majority are between

twenty-two and thirty years of age. In some instances women with thirty-eight and forty years to their credit have been set forth as the central figure in a successful novel, notably, Mrs. Faulkner in " The Choir Invisible."

To-day, in real life, a girl only twenty-five years old is somewhat young to receive the most favorable considerations in the matrimonial lists. Statistics of the last decade show that the marrying age that is now most in vogue with women is twenty-nine.

Popular " Bachelor Maids " have supplanted unpopular " Old Maids." What significant changes, personally and socially, does the happier term imply! The " Bachelor Maid " is independent, up-to-date, charming. Her degree does not mean social ostracism on account of age. On the contrary, the self-possession, the experience, the awakened sympathy, and the enrichment of mind which are the happy bestowment of the few years between sixteen and twenty-five or thirty, give her distinctive advantage, socially, over the immaturity of her sixteen years' old sister.

The fact that the "Bachelor Maid" is not married is no more placed to her discredit or counted against her attractiveness, to-day, than is the same single state put on the debit side of her bachelor brother's social account.

It went without saying, formerly, that a woman who was a grandmother was an "old woman," or, at best, "a nice old lady." The proverbial chimney-corner chair, or some unobtrusive position—such as that of general household helper—was tacitly conceded to be her legitimate place. To-day, instead of being retired or of becoming second-grade helpers, grandmothers are realizing that they are equipped to stand at the helm and steer. They are directors of homes, of business enterprises, of women's clubs. They are society dictators, and even stars in grand and comic opera.

The fact that a woman is a grandmother or a great-grandmother does not deter her from taking a four years' course of prescribed study, mastering a foreign language, being a member of a physical culture class or a dan-

cing class, studying music, organizing a relief association, going into commercial life, financing large industrial enterprises, writing scientific and popular books, or taking a trip around the world. Indeed, it is quite the popular thing for grandmothers to "improve" themselves in such fashion.

What woman is there, rich in the experience of many years of growth and accomplishment, who will not sympathize with the feeling expressed by Mrs. Antoinette Brown Blackwell at a meeting of The Woman's Professional League of New York City? The subject for the day's discussion was "Progress." Mrs. Blackwell—the first woman regularly ordained as a minister in this country—was one of the speakers. A preceding speaker had exhibited a foot-stove, such as in more primitive days used to be carried to church to keep the feet warm. When Mrs. Blackwell rose, she said: "I have been made to feel to-day as if I were my own great-grandmother! I used to carry one of those little 'foot-warmers.' So, you see, I have

belonged to a period of society whose fashions are to-day historical curiosities; but, notwithstanding this previous participation in a life now quite obsolete, I feel that I am also a vital part of this present wonderful age of progress. I am in hearty accord with the purpose of this organization of women. Am I not a 'feature' on to-day's programme? Can you not understand, then, how the sight of that little foot-stove takes me generations backward from my present life and interests, and makes me feel as if I were my own great-grandmother?"

May not an exceptional woman who lives long enough to be her own great-grandmother, and who is still vigorous in interest, sympathy and action, be the exemplar of many fortunate women in generations to come? The tendency of the times points that way.

"Hear, O my son, and receive my saying;
And the years of thy life shall be many.
"I have taught thee in the way of wisdom. . . . ."

—*Proverbs* iv, 10-11.

"For by me thy days shall be multiplied,
And the years of thy life shall be increased."

—*Proverbs* ix, 11.

III

NO "TIME-EXPIRED" MEN

"This preachment about being seventy years young," declared an ultra-orthodox woman, "is not only contrary to nature, but it is also sacrilegious! It is like setting an individual's petty opinions against divine authority! There is no reason for doubting that the Biblical allotment of 'three-score years and ten,' for the average length of man's life, is a divine ordinance as much as anything else in the Bible is."

It takes a long hark back to the days of superstition and religious bigotry, when to neglect and scourge the body were deemed essential to the salvation of the soul, to under-

stand how anybody in this progressive twentieth century can be troubled in spirit by such self-torturing questions. Atavism must be the explanation. Strange, too, that so many persons are mistaken regarding this personal bit of Biblical lore. Even Mark Twain made this statement at his seventieth birthday banquet: "Three-score years and ten—it is the scriptural statute of limitation. After that you owe no active duties; for you, the strenuous life is over. You are a 'Time-Expired' man, to use Kipling's military phrase."

The Bible does not admonish man to be prepared for a three-score years and ten limit to earthly existence; it does not suggest that it would be wise to chloroform people or to put them out of commission at that age; it does not teach that to conduct one's life so that one shall be young, practically, at seventy years is contrary to divine or to psychologic law. The Ninetieth Psalm is not prophetic; it is "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." In it he makes this statement to the Lord concerning his own people and his own time:

"The days of our years are threescore years and ten,
Or even by reason of strength fourscore years."

Moses does not say that the years of the following generations shall be so limited, or that they ought to be. Simply that the years of his own people *are* thus and so. One can but wonder why mankind has not chosen the leader's life, instead of the lives of those who were led, as a standard for the span of their preordained life. The Biblical authority regarding Moses' age is, "He was an hundred and twenty years old when he died;" and, "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."

And note the words of Isaiah. Isaiah does not make statements about the existing conditions of his own time. He speaks in the future tense; he prophesies, saying, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me." Part of this hopeful forecast of the good times that are in store for the righteous is that "the child shall die an hundred years old."

The expression, "a child an hundred years old," is, of course, figurative. A child in

literal definition is a person who has lived only a few years—any number less than maturity. We outgrow the especially distinguishing marks of childhood during life's first score of years. The physical body reaches man's or woman's stature. Mentally, one becomes accustomed to the universe and all the marvels thereof. The brain having been continuously and variously acted upon by external environments becomes habituated to such action. The individual loses the charm of childhood's wonderment. At twenty he takes the perpetual miracles of daily life—birth, death, day and night, the sun, moon, the seasons, the life of a bee, and the growth of a blade of grass—as a matter of course, unfortunately much as middle-aged and elderly people do.

May not "a child an hundred years old" be prescient words that foretell to what life may eventually attain when men better understand and obey the laws of their being? May they not imply that it is within man's ability so to conserve and economically utilize his

vital energy that he may live an hundred years of rich, abounding life, that he may appropriate all the wealth of experience that those years yield, and yet remain in spiritual attitude a child? May he not, in very truth, be childlike, *i.e.*, interested, enthusiastic, genuine, spontaneous, receptive of mind and sympathetic of heart? May he not be a child in normal physical manifestations, *i.e.*, be healthful, sturdy, thoroughly alive and alert; free, flexible, mobile in every movement; harmonious and joyous in expression?

It would be no more wonderful for man thus to control the building forces of his brain and body, through an understanding of their operative laws, than it is wonderful that, through a partial mastery of certain laws of physics, he controls the forces swirling around the world sufficiently to speak across eighteen hundred miles of ocean without a material medium for the transmission of vibrations.

"I go to concert, party, ball—what
profit is in these?
I sit alone against the wall and strive
to look at ease.
The incense that is mine by right
they burn before her shrine;
And that's because I'm seventeen
and she is forty-nine."

—*Rudyard Kipling.*

"At sixty-two life has begun;
At seventy-three begin once more;
Fly swifter as thou near'st the sun,
And brighter shine at eighty-four.
At ninety-five
Shouldst thou arrive,
Still wait on God, and work and
thrive."

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

IV

CONCERNING BIRTHDAYS

The regular reckoning of birthdays makes for old age. What good fortune it would be if people in general were to forget the year of their birth, as they forget the incidents of the first years of their lives. Many persons who are now staidly and uninterestingly sedate would be quite different and younger in expression if they were uncertain whether twenty or sixty years had slipped by since they were born.

Civilized man cannot entirely lose this personal reckoning with his own past, but he can refuse to dwell on the figures of his life as they climb up. It is quite possible to keep only an indifferent tally on them—one subject to

shrinkage. Why, after all, are the years of one's life given such importance? If you are my friend, does it matter to me in what year you were born? Do I love you because of your age, or because of what you yourself are? If you are a stranger and have a message for my spirit, is your year record of any more interest to me than is your height or weight record? Does it make any difference whether Emerson was twenty-three or sixty-three when he wrote "The Over-Soul"? Were Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning less ideal types of lovers because she was thirty-nine and he was thirty-three when they first met? Did it signify to the hundreds of wounded soldiers ministered to by the "Good Gray Poet" in what year he was born? Does the mere incident of age by itself ever increase or decrease the area of sympathy between two men or two women? Do we not sometimes cordially dislike people of our own age, and are we not often devotedly attached to people of an age much greater or less than our own? It is not the age element, primarily, but the content of

a person's being, plus his or her attractiveness or unattractiveness in personal expression, that endears or repels in human commerce.

Birthday records have a demoralizing influence on our mental attitude toward ourselves. We feel as young, as full of life and enthusiasm as we ever did; but a birthday announces that we have lived twenty-eight or forty or fifty-five years. Some figure—according to our preconceived ideas of propriety—means for us a parting of the ways. It is time to "settle down"; so we do it, mentally and physically. Whoever so settles and allows daily life to degenerate into dull routine opens wide the door to old age.

William Dean Howells says, "Whatever is established is sacred—to those who do not think." Lack of thought, lack of sympathy with the other person's viewpoint must be the explanation of the sacred atmosphere with which many people, sentimental and prosaic, surround birthdays, especially the birthdays of those advanced in years. Would it not be considerate to omit progressive birthday parties?

Does not the secret pain they cause outweigh any transient pleasure they may give? Can any alive adult be made happier by being reminded every twelve months of his or her increasing age?

If friends desire to give a dear one a present, or to burn candles in that one's honor, why, let it be done occasionally, not on a stated occasion—the birth anniversary. Certainly, the custom of rating ourselves and others on Life's lists according to the year in which each happened to be born is one from which no advantage accrues and, often, much disadvantage. Such rating is sometimes unkind to the point of cruelty.

A person of capable mind and vigorous body must feel much as does an innocent person imprisoned for crime, when he is confronted with age statistics that debar him from being a candidate for official, political, professional, clerical or commercial recognition.

There is no equity in a personal rating based on years. "Some are old in heart at

forty, and some are young at eighty," said Charles Reade. The same wide latitude must be allowed to mental and physical abilities. Violent exercise might prove dangerous to most men after the age of sixty, but a man now eighty-four years of age has taught boxing in New York City for the last half century and " is still actively following his profession." He declares that he finds that exercise exhilarating to mind and body. William Cullen Bryant, writing " Thanatopsis " at nineteen years of age, had a mental grasp far beyond the reach of many people at any age; making a standing jump of several feet when he was sixty-three, he was younger than the average man of half that number of years; translating the " Iliad " at seventy-six, he was not old in the true sense of the word.

When birthday records are clearly such unreliable standards of measurement of man's physical condition, intellectual abilities and personal attractiveness, is it not strange that the great majority of people revert to them so persistently? From the cradle to one's

epitaph, the years of one's life are naggingly flaunted before one. If a man marries or dies, commits a crime or founds a hospital, one of the first questions is, "How old is he?" Possibly the emphasis put upon years by those dealing with young children is largely the cause for the unwarranted influence that years have over adult minds.

Who has not been guilty of magnifying the importance of years to young children? It is the exceptional one-in-a-thousand adult who, in "making conversation" with children or in trying to be "nice" to them, does not fall back on the trite questions, "What is your name?" and "How old are you?" While from parents, grandparents, aunts and cousins, a little child is ever and again hearing about its age.

Psychology teaches that, "According as a function receives daily exercise or not, the man becomes a different kind of being later in life." The habit of so continuously calling a child's attention to its age tends to ingrain deep among the first and most enduring impres-

sions on the "brain-stuff" a wrong estimate of the importance of years, *per se;* moreover, its direct influence on the child may be bad—negatively so on a child of self-assertive tendencies, and positively so on a child of a timid, sensitive nature.

A boy of self-assertive tendencies often comes to look upon his "so many years old" as a personal aggrandizement. Such a little fellow will boast, "*I'm* seven years old, and Bobbie's only six!" He takes credit to himself for his years as something for which he deserves reward or praise.

To the shy, backward child, the consciousness of his accumulating years is shame. He shrinks before them, humiliated. His sensitive spirit quivers under such accusations as, "He is small for his age, isn't he?" or, "He hasn't grown an inch in two years!" Or, "Ten years old! Is it possible! Why, he isn't any taller than my Harold, who is only eight!" If a child has not gone through certain books at a certain age, in accordance with the prescribed grind, he is known at

school as "not very bright" or "dull" or "stupid"; and at home receives, at best, indulgent pity. All this is immeasurably wrong. Most children have intermittent periods of growth, mental and physical. Because a longer time than is usual happens to intervene between some of these periods in the development of some children, there is no warrant for making them self-conscious and miserable by taunting them about their age. A child who is not up to the average expectancy in development at a certain age may be ahead of it three or four years later. Slow development is not the sign of final under-development any more than youthful precocity is the sign of adult mental preëminence.

Seventy years old, not young, people are given to harping tediously on their age—not infrequently in a boastful spirit. Is not such tiresome iteration, also due, at least partly, to the fact that from babyhood up their attention has been too much focused on the mere time measurement of life? Have not birthday records been a potent factor in leading

them to think about the years they have lived and the years they hope to live, to the gradual exclusion of thinking about living any year or day in the most helpful and healthful manner? The vital question concerning any man at any age is, What is he doing with his life? not, In what year was he born?

Birthdays, if recognized at all, should be celebrated in a similar manner to the celebration of Christmas, when it is spiritual in character—that is, in the spirit of love and of thankfulness for our Saviour's life-lesson. We do not truly celebrate any birthday unless we rejoice because of what the love of and for that child, parent, brother, sister, husband, wife or friend means to us; otherwise, such celebrations are merely unthinking adherence to an established custom.

Certain young women in society, who are perennially "past twenty-two," and who step with graceful agility from out their own set when it is thinned out by Cupid's arrows into the ranks of the next younger set, inaugurate a fashion that is worthy of universal adoption.

All women who have passed their thirtieth birthday, and most men who have passed their fortieth, wish secretly, if not avowedly, that they could stop the hands on life's dial. And why should they not? Why should they not follow the example of the charming Frenchwoman who "forgot to remember her birthdays"? If there must be some specific numeral attached to the day on which one's family and friends especially express their gladness because one was born, why not let each adult choose a figure to his or her liking and then live up to it, or, more probably, down to it? As a fascinating young grandmother wrote to her husband on a birthday spent apart from him, "Dear, to-day I'm having another thirty-third birthday."

Often a birthday sets a man to philosophizing in this vein: "Well, I'm forty-eight, or fifty-two! There ought to be fifteen or twenty years more of work in me. I must make the most of them and try to get ahead somewhat more." Frankly interpreted, these words mean: "Old age is after me! I must

hurry up and make all the money I can before it overtakes me." (It makes no difference in his mental attitude if he already possesses more than enough for comfort and ease.) "I must discount the present and prepare for the future. I cannot afford to give any time to the enjoyment of the passing hour." This is relinquishing two birds in the hand for an uncertain one in the bush.

Courageously to challenge the present day to yield us its fullest measure of growth and happiness is to make the best, as well as the "most," of all the years of one's life. Resolutely to refuse even in one's secret thoughts to set an age limit to one's ability to work and to enjoy is far-seeing wisdom—the wisdom that safeguards us from old-age habits.

"Would you know the secret of the far-famed elixir of life, perpetual youth? It is versatility—the power to coax and capture the new. The ever young means the ever new."—"*Some Philosophy of the Hermetics.*"

"The greatest loss any person can sustain is that of his childhood. So long as the child survives in the man he is living, but when that is gone he is no better than a mummy-case. A childlike man is far better than an old-manny boy."—*W. W. Story.*

V

OLD AGE A CONDITION

Father Time is, at worst, only "accessory to the crime" of killing our youth when we are two- or three-score or a few more years of age. It is the *way in which the years are lived* which determines whether their effect on any individual shall be for growth and health, or for stagnation and death. After we say good-by to our 'teens the impress of the years upon us is generally of a somewhat deadening and destructive nature, and becomes ever more and more so, as the years pile up against us. But it is possible so to live that their impress on our lives shall be as it was on Agassiz's life, of whom David Starr Jordan says: "When Agassiz died, 'the best friend

that ever student had,' the students of Harvard laid a wreath of laurel on his bier, and their manly voices sang a requiem, for he had been a student all his life long, and when he died he was younger than any of them."

All of us instinctively shrink from decrepitude, infirmity, stiffness of body, loss of faculties, chronic invalidism. And well we may, for these are essential attributes of the *condition called old age.* Some of the more subtle attributes are setness of mind, chronic garrulousness, avarice, self-centeredness, loss of attention and a creeping paralysis of the affections.

It makes no difference at what calendar record this deteriorating condition commences, whether it be at twenty-five or seventy-five years of age; it, in itself, is genuine oldness.

Such deterioration means that a person has not the ability, or perchance the inclination, to act with unconscious spontaneity as he once did. He who is, in very truth, old, has lost much of his physical vigor and rebound, his

enthusiasm has waned, his interests have narrowed and become stale, and his affections have become anæmic.

Professor Elie Metchnikoff, who is one of the most authoritative biologists of the present time, says that old age is a disease in the literal sense of the word, and that it may be combated as any other disease is; that it belongs to the group of disease known as "atrophies," and that "senile atrophy" (old age) "is the combination of many lesser atrophies."

Specifically considered oldness means muscular setness, immobility; youngness means muscular freedom, mobility. Oldness means weak, flaccid muscles; youngness means strong, firm muscles. Oldness means a stiffness of joints as contrasted with the flexibility of "supple-jointed" youngness. Oldness means a stooped or stiff attitude as contrasted with the erect, pliant attitude of youngness. Oldness means inertness, heaviness of movement, as contrasted with the alertness and buoyancy of youth.

To be old in thought and feeling is to be dull, blasé, apprehensive, calculating. To be spiritually young is to be fresh in interest, light of heart, trustful. To be old is to be conservative, timid, reiterative. To be young is to be venturesome, courageous, versatile. To be old is to be fogified, opinionated, selfish, unloving. To be young is to be eager, receptive, generous, loving. Oldness means a preference for sameness, monotony, the established order—good or bad—as contrasted with change, reform, innovations. It means a despondent, harking-back mental habit as contrasted with the just-be-glad spirit of expectant youth.

Whoever will, may earn a long postponement of these dire old-age conditions. The word " earn " is used advisedly. There is no royal road, no purchasable right of way to the El Dorado of Seventy Years Young. All who there arrive must work their way. Not only is " eternal vigilance " necessary, but eternal interest and eternal activity, mental and physical.

"There is no danger so great, so universal, as mental arrest. Decadence is sure to follow."* Only by daily harmonious use of all of one's being—faculties, functions, senses, muscles—can one earn the right to prolonged possession of them. Everywhere, from the jelly-fish to man, activity signifies life. Stagnant water is foul. Non-use or under-use of a faculty or a muscle causes deterioration, atrophy, old age. Excess of activity, or the wrong use of any part of the organism, depletes, weakens, ages.

Those who would live long and be young, then, should avoid: (1) *Under-activity*—easy indolence of mind, dulled sensibilities and inert physical expression. (2) *Over-activity*—intellectual, emotional and physical stress continued to the point of exhaustion. (3) *Perverted activity*—in any of the well-known ways.

In order that we may be resistant to old-age disease, the wear and tear of daily life must be made good by new blood—physical re-

* Dr. G. Stanley Hall, *Chautauqua Herald*, August 4th, 1905.

building—and by new and ever finer control of the spiritual energies. The energy received through rest and the vital processes must be equivalent to that expended in mental, emotional and physical activity. Dr. W. G. Hammond, former Surgeon-General of the United States Army, says, "If such equilibrium could be established, there is no physiological reason why man should not live on indefinitely." A millenium condition, say you! Not possible in the hurry-up times of the twentieth century! Every recognized good is approximately possible, right here and now.

Arthur McFarlane, in his interesting article, "Prolonging the Prime of Life,"* says:—

"Professor Metchnikoff, who describes himself as 'an optimist on scientific grounds,' believes that man does not live the natural span of life, that the score of years now allotted to the state of 'middle age' should, and will be in the not distant future, two-,

**McClure's Magazine*, September, 1905.

three-, or four-score. This is modern science returning to the 'hundred and forty years' which Buffon set down as man's natural life from the logic and evidence of comparative zoölogy."

The vital balance between the day's damage and the day's repair will not be struck off by any one single effort. There must be a growing series of penny savings in the daily output and of penny gains in the daily replenishment of one's physical capital, in order to make such a balance even approximately possible. Every time we gain a wiser, a more economical guidance of our nervous energy in the performance of any physical act, as walking; every time we stimulate an inactive organ, as a sluggish, melancholic liver by exercise; every time we make a better condition for a restorative process, as deep breathing; every time we conjure mental serenity by the physical expression of that state, as in relaxing the jaw when one is impatient; every time we shift our mental slides and replace an ugly, disheartening picture by a pleasing one; in

short, every time we use our dynamic will-energy toward self-government and health, instead of succumbing to the insidious tendency to deterioration, we are saving and making pennies of that wealth which Emerson ranks as first, namely, health. Every additional health-penny lifts a person one remove further from the physical and mental bankruptcy of old age.

"In habit and interest we find the psychological poles corresponding to the *lowest and the highest activities of the nervous system*. . . .

"The nervous process passes from the stage of fresh accumulation to the stage of habit by the law of downward growth. . . . New relations are interesting; the nervous growth is 'upward,' involving higher integrations."

—*James Mark Baldwin.*

"A settled, unchangeable, clearly foreseeable order of things does not suit our constitution. It tends to melancholy and a fatty heart!"—*Henry Van Dyke.*

VI

HABIT AND OLD AGE

"We must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can, and we should guard against the growing into ways that are likely to be disadvantageous to us as we would guard against the plague."*

"Growing into ways"—either good or bad—is simply being dominated by habit. Some habits are advantageous, and some are "disadvantageous" to us.

As a conserver of nervous energy, the automatic or habit-way of physical action is highly

* James's "Psychology."

advantageous. It is in the nature of "explaining the obvious" to say that the sovereign control that habit early assumes over the multiplicity of our daily acts gives to our higher faculties the freedom necessary for their best growth and development. Otherwise, one's time and energy would be consumed in the execution of such ordinary acts as standing, walking, bathing, dressing and eating; while reading, writing, sewing and dancing would be overwhelmingly laborious and imperfect processes. As it is, habit makes the performance of these and innumerable other acts of daily life almost automatic. The thinking, willing, loving self gives little more than the initial impulse to their execution. Obviously, to wish to be free from habit's control, in these essential daily acts, would be wishing for unbearable burdens; but, as Edward Howard Griggs says: "It is as necessary that one should be able to break the routine of habit for adequate cause as it is that one should relegate much of life to the 'custody of automatism.' . . . To trust

to the mechanism of habit alone is to invite moral atrophy or disaster."*

As an enslaver of body and brain to the old, to the accustomed, the habit-way is most "disadvantageous" to us. It is the aging way. Unless we are vigilantly on guard we shall be caught napping and awake to find ourselves habit-bound, prejudiced, set, old.

Like presumptuous, grasping people, who take an ell if they are given an inch, habit is ever lying in wait for a chance to monopolize the whole domain of man's being. Such absolute despotism over the whole domain by a ruler, who commands excellently well in certain minor provinces, would be disastrous in the extreme to man's progress and his higher possibilities.

The phrases "good habits" and "bad habits" are generally used restrictively. They stand sponsor for a certain few well recognized virtues and vices. A "peculiar habit" stands for some glaring mannerism or eccentricity of expression. Not infrequently, we

* Griggs's "Moral Education."

hear a person boasting that "he has no bad habits," or he may confess to a single, lone one. As a matter of fact, the most scrupulous and conscientious person doubtless has a dozen or more habits that are "disadvantageous" to him or her—really *bad* habits. Over-conscientiousness is in itself a pernicious habit. Many so-called "regular habits" are chronic, bad, aging habits.

Habits include not only our personal customs, but our manners, our expressions, and our ways of doing things, great and small. The way a man sits, stands, walks, the way he carries his head and the way his head carries his hat; the way he bows, smiles, frowns; the way he eats and drinks; the way he ties his necktie and unties his shoes; not only the way he speaks and acts, but, also, the way he refrains from speaking and acting—his inhibitions—are all habits that tend to fasten themselves on him and ever afterwards to repeat themselves as much as does the habit of drink tend to enslave a man—once let it get hold of him.

Behind all external habits are thought and emotion habits—the habit of tick-tack, tick-tack thinking; the habit of imaginative, bright thinking; of humorous and of dolorous thinking; of profound, comprehensive thinking and of narrow, bigoted thinking; of analytic and of synthetic thinking; of pessimistic and of optimistic thinking. There are habits of despondency, surliness, procrastination, gentleness, hopefulness, ambition, selfishness, aspiration, happiness.

All habits come into being in much the same way. The person who is to be blessed or cursed by them is usually quite unconscious of their birth and growth. Some stimulus from the outside world causes a current of nerve energy to be carried to the brain over nerves of sensation, sight, sound, smell or taste. This current makes an impression on the brain. What is called a "discharge" then takes place; this means that a current of nerve energy goes downward from the brain into some of the muscles and vital organs. The path this current makes is the beginning

of a habit. The next time that the brain receives a similar impression, the nervous discharge from it to the outlying bodily territory will tend to be over the same path that the previous discharge took; for that route is the easiest, just as it is easier for man number two to follow in the footsteps of man number one who plowed his way through a deep fall of snow, than for man number two to make an entirely new path for himself. It is still easier for man number three to follow the two preceding men, and so on, until soon every pedestrian, automatically, takes the same path.

This process of habit-forming which involves outward stimulus, brain impression and motor reaction, is described somewhat differently by different psychologists. One authority states that the impression on the brain " sets up a vibration of nerves and cells; and that cells and nerves would repeat previous vibrations more easily than make original ones." But it matters not whether actual paths are ingrained in the brain substance, or

its cells are vibrated without making any such record. The fact is incontrovertible that facility comes by repetition. Thus are habits born.

Habits of action are, clearly, subject to man's volition. A man whose habit it is to stand stoop-shouldered, drink beer and use slang, can, *if he will,* stand erect, drink water instead of beer and use good English instead of perverted.

With habits of thinking and feeling, it may appear to be different; they often seem to be insidiously self-operative. We think and feel along certain lines for no traceable reason and quite against our will. Simply, we so think and feel—and " that's the end of it." It may be the end of it, but it is not the beginning. For thinking and emotional habits originate in the same way that a habit of the feet or any other part of the body does.

Thoughts and feelings are not primarily self-inducing. They are dependent for their first impulse upon some stimulus from the outside world. Something exterior must first

make an appeal to the brain, or some object must first arouse the affections. After a line of thought has been initiated, or an emotion experienced, memory and imagination can repeat them and make them habitual without any outside help.

One awakens in the dead of night when darkness and silence shut out all the usual brain exciting stimuli and immediately falls to pondering a mathematical problem, planning a business scheme, or rehearsing some distressful event that has occurred—or that may never occur. One might plausibly reason: "If memory and imagination can be the exciting causes of such habits, is not the person who so thinks powerless to protect himself? Who can help remembering what he remembers? To try to forget is only to remember more vividly." That is true or not, according to the forgetting process employed. To say that one must forget, must not dwell on distressful events and, at the same time, mentally to image and rehearse the details of the incident that is to be forgotten, only

makes the original impression deeper in the memory-wax instead of obliterating or obscuring it.

The volitional guidance that shall enable us to get somewhat the better of pernicious mental habits, will proceed in manner other than this. It will rout the undesirable mental state not by denial, but by substitution. By a *push of the will* the attention will be directed to other subjects than the one that seeks monopoly of the thoughts. That is the first step; the second is to arouse some degree of interest, however reluctant and feeble it may be, in the new subject by establishing a *motor relationship* with it. For instance, suppose some frightful calamity has deprived me of the one person dearest to my life. The shock comes with such impelling force, the brain impression is so vivid and the tendency to its motor reactions is so strong, that the ability to respond to anything else beneath the stars seems gone. A deadening mental and physical apathy settles upon me. Now, memory and imagination, uninterrupted and un-

checked, would lead me to re-live, over and over again, the harrowing details of the calamity, and to dwell despondently upon the loss sustained, to the exclusion of all other thoughts and emotions. Melancholia is but a few removes from such reiterative, depressing mental action. But some friend, or some incident, or some chance word, makes me aware of my perilous mental condition. My will now consciously enters the field against memory and imagination. It forces my reluctant and listless attention elsewhere; perhaps to some unfulfilled obligation, to some one's necessity which I might relieve, or even to some simple household duty. It then reenforces the hold of these subjects upon my attention by making me act in relation to them. It compels me—albeit much against my inclination—to visit the lawyer or agent; to contribute to the needs of another by physically exerting myself, or to employ my hands in household ministering.

Physical action, the mere objective *doing* of something, is the medicine that often pre-

serves the mind's balance in times of great emotional stress. The psychological explanation is that such motor action itself becomes a new stimulus to the brain; it diverts the nerve energy from its stressful and limited territory, and sends it over paths other than those established by the shock of sorrow. This diversion of the mind's activity brings alleviation. Nature's restorative processes can now have fair play. Rest, recuperation, newness of life follow. Sanity is thus maintained.

Self-centered, reiterative habits of thinking, whether the subject thought upon be religion, reform, chess, sorrow or sin, should be fought against with all the strength of one's will. In very truth, "that way madness lies." Many people instinctively realize this. We hear people who perhaps have never given a moment's study to the action of the mind make such remarks as, "Well! I simply could not stand it! I had to get away! I think I should have gone crazy if I had heard that over again!" or, "I felt as if I should

scream! He so insistently said the same thing over and over!"

Reiterative mental processes are more destructive whenever a personal feeling or an emotion is involved, but dangerous mental stress also results from those of a wholly impersonal nature, such as monotonous work. The case of a young woman typewriter which came under the writer's notice is an illustration in point. She received a commission for several thousand copies of the same letter to be executed as soon as possible. Great as was her desire to do the work speedily, she found each day that after carrying the same sentences in her mind quite a number of times, it was absolutely imperative to have mental change, to read, or talk, or get into the open air, or even to typewrite something else. In describing the effect of the ceaseless mental repetition of the same words, she pathetically said, "It was simply horrible! I could not endure it!"

This discussion of mental states, of habits —their coming and possible overcoming—

may seem far afield and quite unrelated to the main theme of this book. It is not, however, a by-the-way digression. The conclusion forced upon us by the study of the mind's action, pushed a step farther, leads logically to the way suggested in the following chapters for retaining youngness of mind and body.

If too exclusive concentration upon one line of thought, or too dominant usurpation of the mental realm by one kind of emotion, will produce the abnormal condition of the mind called insanity, is it not justifiable to conclude that the restriction of the mind to a few limited lines of thought, and to a few well-worn emotions, which are outwardly manifested in nearly the self-same semi-automatic physical actions, must inevitably tend to lessen interest and mental vigor, to lessen physical strength, elasticity and resistance? And is not such lessening of powers oldness, or, at least, its beginning?

"There is in every society the danger of settling down into fixed forms. Hence the need for the perpetual affirmation of the individual will and ideal."

—*Edward Howard Griggs.*

"It is monotony which eats the heart out of joy, destroys the buoyancy of spirit, and turns hope to ashes; it is monotony which saps the vitality of the emotions, depletes the energy of the will, and finally turns the miracle of daily existence into dreary commonplace."

—*Hamilton W. Mabie.*

VII

KEEP OUT OF RUTS

Keep out of ruts—ruts of thinking, feeling, talking, acting, living! That is the physiological and psychological recipe for prolonged youngness.

Every person who would keep old age at bay should seek newness of experience, of thought, emotion, environment, association and personal expression. He should eagerly seek to do old accustomed acts in a new way. To do only what it has been our habit to do, is to lose the power to do the new. Dr. Halleck in "Education of the Nervous System" says: "The purpose of education is to make reactions from impressions numerous and per-

fect." Reactions from impressions are, at least, partially voluntary. By responding enthusiastically to new stimuli, we retain the power to respond. When a man loses this power, when he no longer has zest for growth, when he is unwilling to take the initiative in behalf of his youth, he joins the ranks of these who are marching heedlessly over the smooth, broad highway to Old-Agedom.

"We are as lazy as we dare to be," says Emerson. Many of us are too daring in this respect for our own safety. We are negatively good-natured; we are temperamentally inclined "to let things slide." We do not realize how we jeopardize the very conditions that make life prized when we allow ourselves to fall into self-indulgent grooves, mental and physical. The self-complacency that prides itself in "taking things easy" may lead to degeneracy; for not only is self-activity of mind and body essential to growth, but it is also essential to the retention of what one now possesses. In no other way can one hope to hold one's own. Verily, it behooves us

to be interested and to express our interest, objectively.

> "One may mope
> Into a shade through thinking, or else drowse
> Into a dreamless sleep and so die off!"

To yield to the habit of easy acquiescence, indifference, lassitude or inertness is gradually to paralyze the faculty of effort. Such paralysis is a sure sign that the years are beginning to down the man. The cure—or better, the ounce of prevention—is, "Keep the faculty of effort alive by giving it a little gratuitous exercise every day," as Professor James admonishes. Dr. Lavender advises in the same vein when, speaking of a neighbor, he says: "He's allowed himself to grow old. Hasn't walked down the hill and back in three years. . . . For my part, I have made a rule about such things, which I commend to you, young man: *As soon as you feel too old to do a thing,* DO it!"*

By "energetic volition" we must keep ourselves free from the too restrictive dominance

* Deland's "The Awakening of Helena Richie."

of habit. Restrictive not only in bodily actions, but also in our higher mental processes; for, unless we safeguard ourselves by resolute will-action in the opposite direction, our thoughts and emotions are liable to fall into the realm of automatism—practically, to do themselves. As Dr. Carpenter says: "Our nervous systems have grown to the way in which they have been exercised, just as a sheet of paper once creased or folded tends to fall forever afterward in the same identical folds." Man must summon his judgment, will and imagination to the rescue, and protect his future against this old-age tendency of the nervous system. He must make himself do the new act, make himself take the new mental attitude, make himself listen without prejudice to the new doctrine, and make himself not oppose the "new-fangled" enterprise because it is new.

Ruts are hazardous to intellectual keenness, to spiritual perception and to youngness of body. As an unknown writer says: "Variety is not only the spice of life; it is a necessary

ingredient. Unbroken monotony is inconsistent with mental vigor; and the more sensitive the mental tissue the more it cries out against monotony."

Change, change is the law of Nature, the law of life abundant. To live in the rut of dull routine inevitably narrows one's whole life and shortens the life of one's youthfulness, if no more. Routine there must be in the great majority of occupations—housekeeping, teaching, farming, in all mechanical, manual and clerical work. Still the outlook is not so bad. While routine must accompany the machinery of daily civilized life, it need not be dull, unvaried routine. Each person must here be his own keeper—the keeper of his youth.

When we cling to old ideas, old prejudices, old styles of dress, old business customs, old ways of doing things, little and big, in short, when we live in ruts, we transgress against the fundamental law of change; sooner or later, we must pay the penalty. Nature is an exact accountant; she never forgets nor for-

gives, but always balances the debits and credits on each man's account with inexorable justice. "Ignorance of the law excuseth no man," is a maxim of natural law as well as of criminal jurisprudence.

Monotony wearies, depletes, enervates, benumbs, ages. Solitary confinement leads to mental deterioration and physical deformity. It is among the severest punishments in penal institutions. More persons go insane, proportionately, following the dreary isolated task of sheep-tending than in any other occupation. Farmers' wives are second, statistically, on this dread list of unfortunates. The cause is easy to discover. Monotony, unvaried routine, lack of new stimuli for the brain, lack of new, safeguarding physical actions!

We hear much about the terrible nervous strain of life in a great city—not without appalling evidence, too—and much about the wholesomeness of life in the country. But what of the ultimate human products of these two environments? Compare any average fifty farmers between the ages of forty-five

and sixty years with any fifty business, professional or political men—who have not depleted their vitality by dissipation—of similar ages in a large city. The latter will be straighter of back, quicker and lighter of movement, physically more adaptable and resistant, and mentally more alert and vigorous. The majority of them will seem, nay, be, in reality, five to eight years younger than their brothers from the country. Nor does the manual labor done by farmers, and their early and long hours of work during the summer, account for the difference in the conditions of the two sets of men. Physical labor is less taxing upon the vitality than intellectual labor, and, taking the whole year through, many business men in cities put in more hours of actual work than do farmers. Besides this, men living in the city often work hard until late hours seeking amusement, whereas men living in the country generally retire early. Clearly, the farmers are more favorably conditioned, hygienically, but the ultimate mental and physical states are usually against them.

The difference in the variety and the intensity of stimuli to the brain which the two environments afford is the chief factor that makes the difference in the two human products.

To Wordsworth and Burns, country life ever afforded a fresh stimulus to the creative powers; but, to the average country person, the environmental stimuli are virtually the same from Christmas to Christmas. In the city one's attention is jogged and jostled at every turn. There is always "something doing," always something out of the ordinary transpiring which challenges the attention. Only a dull, insensate person can escape being somewhat responsive to the intense and stimulating life around him. Unconsciously to himself, a man living in the city spreads out mentally in many directions.

> "Eyes, ears took in their dole,
> Brain treasured up the whole."

But neither the city nor the country—in fact, nothing outside of one's self—is primarily

responsible for any one's adjustment to life. "Life could never be thoroughly dull to a child of Rebecca's temperament," says Kate Douglas Wiggin, "her nature was full of adaptability, fluidity and receptivity." That's the anti-rut prescription! *Adaptability*—meeting new conditions graciously, not with the grim (and aging) virtue of martyrdom which endures what can't be cured; *fluidity*—easily changing the current of one's thought and emotion; *receptivity*—hospitably giving ready audience to new ideas, customs and creeds.

People who are quite deficient in these impressionable qualities may be antagonized by the mere idea of seeking newness in daily experience. They only give willing audience to suggestions that run parallel with their confirmed habits and prejudices. As a certain health officer, speaking of cremation, said, "Oh, it's sanitary, all right, but it does violence to all my traditions and sentiments, and I'll not advocate it." Old traditional ideas, like old dresses, must be freshened up and

made over, else their possessors will find themselves out of step with the times.

Gail Hamilton says: "If there is one thing I cannot abide it is settling down into anything. Do you know the great trouble is that people 'marry and settle.' They would better be hanged. 'Settle' is just another word for growing set and crusty and routiney."

To-day, only the bigot boasts of settled, unalterable convictions. Science has unsettled many of the accepted beliefs of half a century or less ago; it has revolutionized man's ideas of creation and many other events and things. Science itself is preserved from rutward tendencies by such investigators as Luther Burbank who produces a new species—a "scientific impossibility."

"New habits can be launched on condition of there being new stimuli and new excitements. Now life abounds in these, and sometimes they are such critical and revolutionary experiences that they change a man's whole scale of values and system of ideas. In such cases, the old order of his habits will be ruptured; and, if the new motives are lasting, new habits will be formed, and build up in him a new or regenerate nature."

—*William James.*

"It is only when there is no interest that the weary flesh takes the fullest and bitterest stamp of age. Of course, the moral is: Be interested and keep young."

—*Margaret Deland.*

VIII

BODY AND BRAIN COMMERCE

You would be "Seventy Years Young," fellow traveler? Good, but you plead guilty of now being forty years old? Well, while that is not so good, it does not necessarily doom you to continued and ever-increasing oldness; not, unless your own will dooms you.

It is a primary tenet of psychological law that a man's conduct is the result of his *dominant controlling thought.* Biblical teaching is the same—"As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." A person forty years old has by some mishap—illness, neglect, ignorance, self-indulgence, despondency or what not—lost the mental alertness and stamina and the

physical vitality and elasticity which are the essential elements of youth. Some parts of his body are contracted, or weakened, or semi-atrophied, and his brain does not grapple eagerly with new problems, as it is the nature of growing brains to do. He can achieve his youth's redemption by nothing less than a master motive that compels him persistently to *pay heed,* to arouse the faculties of attention and interest and to express aliveness by voice, word and act.

Reciprocity is the law of intercourse between brain and body. By its activity each gives stimulus to the other, and receives, in turn, stimulus from the other's activity. There are distinct motor areas of the brain whose aliveness is primarily dependent upon the energetic activity of the muscles and bodily functions correlated to them. In those deaf from birth there is a certain brain area in which the cells never develop. On the other hand, never is an impression made upon the brain—either by the blood supply or through a sense avenue—that does not in some degree

affect the physical being. "What happens patently when an explosion or a flash of lightning startles us, or when we are tickled, happens latently with every sensation that we receive."*

In order that this body and brain commerce may be of a vivid, youth-endowing character, man's continuous quest must be for new merchandise, *i.e.*, new interests, sympathies, experiences and physical activities. The staple modes of thought, feeling, movement and expression are not enough; as "Buster Brown" says: "What was good for us at one stage of the game won't do *now*. Superstitions and fool ideas have had to go when their usefulness was gone."

Dullness of life, as of trade, attends the man who deals only in old, much handled goods. The personal output of each succeeding year of life should rival in richness, in variety and beauty, that of the preceding. Each year, new lines of traffic should be opened up through the agency of new stimuli.

* James's "Psychology."

This is not too high a price to pay for continued vivid, organic life. To circumscribe one's self of to-day to one's self of yesterday is to face rearward. There is no dead calm in the sea of life where, self-satisfied, one can anchor, neither progressing nor retrograding. What we to-day possess of mental and physical strength must be vitalized by to-day's activity, else there is loss.

If we find that we are less capable of adjusting ourselves to changing conditions than we once were, it is a sign that we are beginning to succumb to the "growing conservatism" of years. Only heroic treatment can save us. The pendulum of our activities must swing to the other extreme. We must become the veriest radicals in our efforts to uproot the established order of our daily customs. We must make ourselves frequently take the initiative in action, for, at any cost of effort, we must lift ourselves out of the groove of use and wont. In no way can one afford to abandon life, its interests, activities, demands and appeals.

Children are ever receiving new impressions from the world through their five senses and are ever responding to them. These new impressions and their motor reactions have a determining effect upon the *quality* of physical development. An idiot whose brain centers have not capacity to receive impressions may develop to the full stature of a man in physical bulk; the texture and quality of his muscles will, however, be as different from a man's that have been normally reacted upon as the texture and grain of a sappy, pithy hemlock are different from those of a resistant, sturdy oak.

The reactionary effect on the body of different orders of mental impressions is by no means confined to the period previous to physical maturity. Maturity is not synonymous with being stationary. Man is never a fixed, unalterable structure. His body is not exempt from the law of all living tissue; the law of continual change, transformation, reconstruction. Who shall say that the quality of this perpetual transformation is not greatly modi-

fied by the quality and intensity of one's mental activity? Every thought and emotion, it must be remembered, has its motor reactions. If the thought be fresh, optimistic, dynamic, constructive, must not the making-over processes that are continually transpiring in the body be correspondingly beneficent? Correspondingly malevolent, aging, must be the physical effects of petty, fretful, pessimistic, aggressive and reiterative self-centered thoughts. Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis says, "Nothing foretells futurity like the thoughts over which we brood." It is enough to keep one awake o' nights from sheer pity when one realizes how thoughts that are aging constitute the habitual daily regimen of so many people.

But man's attitude toward himself is becoming more hopeful. As never before he is to-day seeking to fulfill the old Delphic injunction, "Man, know thyself," and there is little doubt that he will improve upon acquaintance with himself. In the past man has not known the vital physiological effects of thought and

emotion, or the different effects upon the brain of stimuli, stale and fresh. Modern physiological psychology is furnishing this self-knowledge in popular form—comprehensible to laymen as well as to scientist. "We know now from the study of the brain that it keeps on growing in those particular cells in the third layer which are most closely concerned with mental life, until at least the age of sixty-three."*

Dr. C. Hanford Henderson calls the long educational period subsequent to school and college life, "The Experimental Life." The term is significant. Whoever lives the "Experimental Life" welcomes the new; he experiments with it, learns its lesson and absorbs whatever of good and growth it contains into the content of his own being. Such sympathetic response to each day's offering is one of the best protections against the narrowing, benumbing effects of habit.

To take the vital elements of life—friend-

* Dr. G. Stanley Hall, *Chautauqua Assembly Herald*, August 4th, 1905.

ship, love, religion, sacrifice, patriotism, heroism, work, art, beauty—*as a matter of course,* is deliberately to invite prosaic, common-place oldness. "To let go of our enthusiasm is to let go of our youth."

"To live well we need to form good habits, but it is even more necessary that these should be constantly controlled and frequently revised by conscious reason."

—*Edward Howard Griggs.*

"Life is a series of surprises. We do not guess to-day the mood, the pleasure, the power of to-morrow, when we are building up our being. People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them."—*Emerson.*

IX

THE HABIT OF THE UNHABITUAL

The man or woman, who daily lives up to the habit of the unhabitual, will never become dull, uninteresting, prejudiced—nor as old, in any sense, as otherwise might be.

"There is an everlasting struggle in every mind between the tendency to keep unchanged, and the tendency to renovate, its ideas."* To wage warfare against this tendency to keep not only our ideas unchanged, but our physical actions, our associations, and all of our self-presentations unchanged, and to ally ourselves enthusiastically with the op-

*James's "Psychology."

posite inherent tendency, is to take the safest road across the intervening years from Now to Then—to the kingdom of "Seventy Years Young."

At his seventieth birthday banquet, Mark Twain explained how he had "beaten the doctor and the hangman for seventy years." He said: "Since forty I have been regular about going to bed and getting up—and that is one of the main things. I have made it a rule to go to bed when there was not anybody left to sit up with; and I have made it a rule to get up when I had to. That has resulted in an unswerving regularity of irregularity." "Unswerving regularity of irregularity" are only other words for the habit of the unhabitual. What a swing of the pendulum is Mr. Clemens's doctrine from that of Poor Richard's Almanac!

> "Early to bed and early to rise,
> Makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."

Farmers are "early to bed and early to rise" people, but they are not as a class wealthy,

especially healthy—or long lived—nor are they noted for their exceptional wisdom. Such proverb platitudes, that sound well but do not prove up well, make for the habitual, for oldness.

Many people become victims of the habitual through subservience to artificial, conventional codes. Their ideal is always to dress, act and speak in strict accordance with the "they say" proper standard. The living down to such an ideal—if ideal it may be called—results in the sacrifice of individuality, of simple sincerity of expression and of youthful spontaneity.

Custom tyrannizes less over men of great natures than over men of average endowments. Perhaps that is one reason why they are great. Life with them is less a calculation of petty social and politic accounts than it is with others. They are more nobly spontaneous and true. They are, and do not have to seem to be.

How emancipated from the conventional, the habitual, was Macaulay. Notwithstand-

ing his father's austere discipline and melancholic gloom, and the weight of unusual responsibilities, in his home life he was like a gleeful child. Frolic and fun was the order of the hour when he came home. One writer says: "His visits shot the gloom through with sunshine, and when he went away, even the neighbor's children were in tears. His health and enthusiasm infected everybody he met."

Conformity to convention means to be calm, to repress, to inhibit, to be formal in manner. It means to dissemble, to affect an indifference and immobility that is known as "the correct thing." In time, pretense becomes habit. Then it is no longer pretense, it is the man. He is as old, as set, as unresponsive, in mind and body as he originally forced himself to seem to be. Thus do we blindly make the doom we dread—premature old age.

"Sow a thought, reap an act;
Sow an act, reap a habit;
Sow a habit, reap a destiny."

Dreading decrepitude, infirmity, garrulity, senility, people hasten their unwelcome advent by this " thought-act-habit-destiny " process.

In his " Psychology " Professor James says, in substance, that it is the old fogyism element *that tends to keep ideas unchanged.* This old fogyism tendency which according to his estimate begins to gain mastery over the majority of people by the time they are twenty-five years of age, resents the new—the new fact, the new idea, the new methods—" while genius in truth means little more than the faculty of perceiving in unhabitual ways."

Unless we offer self-protective resistance to the neural tendencies of our beings, we shall become with the passing years tiresome repetitions of our former selves; each repetition being less vigorous, capable and attractive than the previous one. Our bodies and our minds will become less buoyant and mobile, less capable of responding to new stimuli; we shall yield more and more to inertia. We shall become " set in our ways "—in a word, unquestionably old. Contrariwise,

if we continuously offer a counter-force to the inherent tendency that makes for automatism, we may keep our world and ourselves young.

The habit of the unhabitual is not akin to fickleness, irrationality or irresponsibility. Unquestionably, in every well-balanced character there must be what Edward Howard Griggs calls a "permanent center." No dependence can be placed on a person's attitude toward love, friendship, work, patriotism, religion, morality, truth or even toward his own life whose character is not based on such a center of stability. But tenacity of purpose, sincerity of motive and diligence are altogether consistent with marked variety in objective expression. As Dr. C. Hanford Henderson says: "The great people of the world have had this large versatility. You recall the tremendous sweep of Cæsar's activities. You see Michaelangelo painting Madonnas and building bridges, frescoing ceilings and shaping David. You picture Leonardo leading all Florence spell-bound by the charm of his many-sided genius. In

Goethe, you have the poet, philosopher, statesman, scientist, artist, man of letters. . . . In Franklin, you have a man distinguished, if I have counted rightly, in at least eleven different directions."*

The habit of the unhabitual means newness in our every day relations: First, new habits in our bodily actions; second, new habits in our relation to people; third, new habits in relation to our work and environment; and fourth, new habits of thought and feeling.

No general revolution in one's mode of living is necessary in order to form the habit of the unhabitual. One need not give up one's present occupation, or move into a new country, or part company with old friends. Albeit, radical changes in one's life sometimes work wonders.

Some natures are like certain kinds of quartz. They are so tenacious of what they possess, so repellent to everything that is different from themselves, and so reluctant to

* Henderson's "Education and the Larger Life."

change their form, that it takes a shock like a dynamite blast to force them out of the aging rut of the habitual.

On the other hand, many persons are a-hunger for change in themselves. They are tired of their monotonous thoughts, feelings and self-expressions. They are tired of playing the same old rôle, in the same old way, on the same old stage. They long to have a different viewpoint, to do something out of the ordinary, to feel the stimulation of new associations and environment. They are stirred by the " divine discontent " that points to higher realizations. Their tendency toward the unhabitual is so well established that they turn toward whatever is new in thought, discovery and opportunity as instinctively as the sunflower turns toward the light. I recall an incident relating to a certain ninety-one-years-young great-grandmother who was of such nature. When bicycle riding was alarmingly new, one young woman who dared this " unwomanly " manner of locomotion called forth the hearty condemnation of an unfriendly

cousin. This cousin "wondered what great-grandmother would say to such an unladylike spectacle!" Being possessed with a troublesome sense of duty, she reported the matter to their mutual great-grandmother. But the little German great-grandmother who still "helped" in her garden, did her own housework, read the periodicals of the day, and thought nothing of walking two miles to town, instead of being shocked, said: "What's that you tell me? Gertrude rides a bicycle? Well, I'm glad she does. I've thought some of learning to ride one myself!" Bless her! In spite of four-score and ten odd years, she was young in inclination and in habit.

The habit of the unhabitual is subject to the same process of establishment that all habits are. If to-day we do some unhabitual thing, perhaps at the cost of a positive wrench of effort, to-morrow another unhabitual act, mental or physical, can be executed with a little less volitional pulling of one's self together for the onset, and so on with decreasing effort from day to day.

People who have passed the thirtieth yearstone have no occasion to agonize in spirit if they do not *spontaneously* respond to many of the appeals of life. Should the mind require spurring before it will pay heed, why, then, spur it. In very truth, the will must often spur us away from the ruts of indifference, indolence, pseudo-superiority, avarice and all narrowing trends. Tussels between our inclinations and our will indicate that we are still alive to our ethical responsibility in the fashioning of our lives. They are the " growing pains " of the spirit.

Even in childhood this struggle must be fought over and over, else no self-control, and no power of adjustment to life's varying conditions and calls are developed. The significance of this inner struggle is practically the same whether the boy has to spur his mind toward his lessons away from the woods and fishing of his inclination, or the man has to spur his mind toward outdoor activities that make for youngness away from the easy-chair and the favorite book of his inclination.

The psychological point on which emphasis is here laid is the necessity of daily stimulation of the will *in some way or other*—the more unhabitual the way, the better. "Nerve cells should be exercised to the point of reasonable fatigue, so as to be put in the proper condition for being made stronger by the nutriment which they will then be in condition to assimilate. Memory is directly dependent upon nutrition."* So is the imagination, so is the will.

To keep the imagination fresh and active is to be childlike in spirit; to keep the will alert, sturdy and reliable is to protect one's self from senility at the hundredth or the hundred and "anythingth" year.

If the will fails us, we fail. Enthusiasm often enables one to make a startling halfback rush toward a desired goal, but it is only a resistant and persistent will that gives one the hardihood to gain ground and hold it against the opposing line of well-organized combatants; *i.e.,* inherited tendencies and

* Halleck's "Education of the Central Nervous System."

deeply ingrained habits that assert themselves with pernicious facility.

"Always keep the stream of thought running," says Matthew Arnold. Living according to the habit of the unhabitual allows this stream scant opportunity to become a placid pool or to stagnate. In the pathetic story, "Avis," Elizabeth Stuart Phelps suggests a way out of the eddying pools of thought. She says: "On Monday when the fire smokes, on Tuesday when the bills come in, on Wednesday when the children cry, it is not more smoke, more debt, more tears, we want; tell us, rather, how a statue grew, or how a poem sprang, or how a song was wrought, or how a prayer was conceived." Smoke, debts and tears are here the habitual. The soul cries for moments of release from such distressing details. It cries for inspiration from something unhabitual to the daily domestic struggle.

To bring moments of art, poetry, song and spiritual aspiration into the content of daily life, would be to give unhabitual stimuli to

thought and emotion in the lives of very many people. Daily life, uninspired by high ideals, tends to submerge people in the realm of the matter-of-fact, tends to make them selfishly appropriate the highest blessings of human association—love, one's children, one's wife or one's husband—and to treat them as if they were just a customary part of the equipment for the business of living. They are the young in spirit who are able to keep life above the plane of ordinariness.

Some of the best protections against dull "low levels" of living are to cultivate varied and ever-varying interests; to make the area of contact with all phases of life as large as possible; to spread out in many directions mentally, sympathetically, motorly, and to penetrate deeply in some, or, at least, in one.

A play-business is as necessary as a work-business. No man or woman who seeks self-realization can afford to be without one. An avocation is as profitable, ultimately, as a vocation. When any vocation whatsoever completely absorbs one, it is, in very truth, a

"getting that impoverisheth." Men thus exploit their own future. One man who had gambled with his life in such fashion, recently confessed his failure to a friend. He said: "I have made money. I am now one of the 'multis,' but I am poor and sick in spirit—and I know it. Things, people, books, bore me! Even my family—well, the whole truth is, *I have lost the capacity for happiness.* The only thing my brain responds to is some scheme for making more money! And my reason shows me the uselessness, the barrenness of such effort."

Darwin, late in life, deeply regretted that "his mind had become a machine for grinding out general laws," and realized that if his devotion to his research work had not excluded other lines of interest, "parts of his brain now atrophied would doubtless have been kept alive."

That college professor proved himself a practical psychologist who, while delivering a course of lectures on psychology at one of the Chautauqua summer schools, incidentally

attended the School of Domestic Science, and learned how to make bread "just to surprise his wife."

That which is a vocation to one may be an avocation to another. At the time when Dr. Alice Freeman Palmer was president of Wellesley College, she made some of the joys of housekeeping her avocation. Once, being asked what was the happiest moment of her life, Mrs. Palmer thought for a moment, then laughingly replied, "When the jelly jellied."

Whether it be making bread or jelly, reading or making books, running or inventing a machine, playing the violin or playing farmer, cultivating roses or teaching settlement children, the spirit of youth requires that we should have lines of interest other than those that are habitual, or coincident with our daily vocation. Hobbies, fads, "isms," are good mental tonics. They give restful variety to the worker from his work and save many of the idle rich from the fatal occupation of "killing time"—killing time, which

means killing one's interest, enthusiasm, youngness.

The habit of the unhabitual can be fostered in a hundred little ways. It is fostered whenever we catch ourselves up and refrain from telling some old story or stale joke, whenever we willfully direct our line of thought or reading into a new channel, whenever we express an old idea in an original dress, whenever we sympathetically relate ourselves to people who are not of our set or clique, or to those whose experience has been radically different from our own. It is fostered every time we decline to take ourselves and our experiences too seriously, every time that we look an unkind Fate in the face and smile, every time that we can see the funny side of a perplexing situation. In short, it is fostered every time that we think, feel, say or do anything that makes the "stream of thought" somewhat change its ordinary course.

"A little girl's bad brother set a trap to catch birds. She knew it was wrong, cruel, against the laws of kindness, altogether inexcusable from her point of view.

"She wept at first, then her mother —two hours later—noticed that she had become cheerful once more.

"'What did you do?' asked the mother.

"'I prayed for my brother to be made a better boy.'

"'What else?'

"'I prayed that the trap would not catch any little birds.'

"'What else?'

"'Then I went out and kicked the old trap all to pieces.'"—*Anonymous.*

X

"IF TO DO WERE AS EASY—"

"If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do," not only "chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces," but straightway there had been as marked revolutions in man's personal estate —his thoughts, passions, character and body. But "easy" or not, *to do* is the only way to keep young in mind and body. "It is the motor act that gives the set to character."* And it is the motor acts that in the last analysis chiefly determine man's physical condition.

Failure to do what it "were good to do" and what one has the capacity for doing constitutes the death-warrant of many a person's

* James's "Psychology."

youngness. The would-be author who sat down before a "potential bottle of ink, and thought of the thoughts he ought to think," but did not think them, was his own executioner.

Due and right guidance of the motor activities makes for the retention of youngness in three specific ways: (1) One is thus enabled to modify if not to oust thoughts and feelings that are "likely to be disadvantageous"; (2) The motor areas of the brain are stimulated; (3) The body is kept vigorous, flexible—young.

Psychology speaks authoritatively regarding the inevitable reactionary effect of the body's activities on the brain. "Whenever the fingers are flexed, the arm extended, the muscles of a leg moved, the body bent, the expression of the face changed or a word spoken, there is a corresponding motor modification of the brain."* "It is easy to demonstrate that such bodily exercise as gymnastics, fencing, swimming, riding, dancing and skat-

* Halleck's "Education of the Central Nervous System."

ing are much more exercises of the central nervous system, of the brain and spinal marrow than of the muscles."*

The mutual reactionary effect of inner psychic states and outer physical ones is much as Lawrence Sterne puts it: "A man's body and his mind (with the utmost reverence to both I speak it) are exactly like a jerkin and a jerkin's lining—rumple the one, you rumple the other." A dejected physical attitude induces a dejected mental state. A brave outward expression stimulates the nerve-ganglion that begets courage. The half-frightened boy who whistles his loudest when passing a "spooky" place in the dark is developing courage according to psychologic law, even though he never heard the word psychology.

It is a mooted question among students of the mind and body whether a man is old because he stoops, or stoops because he is old; whether he is glad because he laughs, or laughs because he is glad. Whichever may be the cause and which the effect, certain it

* Du Bois Reymond, *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XXI.

is that indirect control of the thoughts and emotions, through the activities and expressions of the physical self, is easier than is control by direct assault.

It is little short of impertinence to admonish a friend "not to give way" to grief, worry, despondency, passion or nervousness, or not to fear disease, old age or other personal disaster. Everybody of ordinary intelligence knows that such mental states are injurious; but knowing does not enable one to cease so feeling and thinking. It is *not* "as easy to do as to know what were good to do."

A friend is a genuine benefactor who helps another out of a mental or emotional slough by persuading him to some physical activity that shall vigoruosly tense his muscles, increase his breathing, and speed the blood through his arteries at a quickened rate. These physiological changes must inevitably react wholesomely on the inner psychological state.

A nervous state can often be vanquished by

a tramp through the woods, an exhilarating mountain climb, a brisk game of tennis or golf, a gallop on a spirited horse, a swim, a good pull at the oars, even a plunge into a bath, followed by fresh clothes, five minutes of stimulating physical exercises, or the dramatic oral reading of some stirring bit of literature where one thinks and feels intensely with the author: *anything serves* that furnishes new stimulus to the imagination and demands positive physical expression.

It is good to be thoroughly aroused; good to lose all conventional and habitual restraint —as at a 'varsity boat race or a baseball or football game; good to clap the hands, stamp the feet, stand on benches, jump up and down, throw the hat in the air and cheer to the limit of the lungs—good for the thoughts, the emotions and the body.

If one is heavy of heart or down on his luck or melancholic, he should compel himself to show forth cheerfulness in his objective expression—not necessarily by words, but most necessarily by actions. He should stand

erect and show a brave front to the world, lift the drooping eyelids, walk with light, buoyant step, romp with children, take a brisk run in the fresh air or dance a few turns around the room. Dr. G. Stanley Hall, speaking of the influence of rhythmical bodily movements, says: "It is probable that man gets nearer his lost paradise when he is dancing than at any other time. If a person is nervously tired he should dance the minuet; if he is apathetic, something faster. Dancing has great curative powers. Men at fifty or eighty years of age ought to dance."

Of course, one does not feel inclined to vigorous or animated objective activity when one is subjectively inert, apathetic, or depressed. It is a question of inclination, self-indulgence and oldness on the one side, and of keeping alive while we live on the other. Which will you choose?

Nothing is more conclusively proven by physiological psychology in its study of the baby, child, youth, young man, adult, and aged person, than the fact that human life is meant,

first of all, for activity, not for idleness; that it is only through positive expression—not mere passive existence—that a human being can approximate his possible self-realization. It is a primary tenet of psychology that high thinking counts for little, and strong emotion for less than nothing (because it weakens the character), *unless they are carried over into some concrete activity*. We grow mentally and physically by activity; we are educated by activity; our influence is largely dependent upon it, and only by it can we hope long to retain our youngness.

Our vigilance must never languish or lapse, if we would not be lured by inclination and inertia into degenerating inactivity. It is so easy not to do, so easy to accept petty personal comforts at the sacrifice of mental stamina and physical hardihood. We baby ourselves in innumerable ways, especially when there is no financial necessity to urge us to exertion. Often, we are self-hypnotized by our clever excuses for inactivity—the storm, the heat or cold, a headache, a feeling of lassitude, an

expected caller, a little sewing, letter-writing or the latest magazine, becomes to us a reason instead of a subterfuge for our being guilty of what David Starr Jordan calls "the sin of undervitalization."

"We forget that every good that is worth possessing must be paid for in strokes of daily effort. We postpone and postpone until these smiling possibilities are dead. By neglecting the necessary concrete labor, by sparing ourselves the little daily tax, we are positively digging the graves of our higher possibilities."

—*William James.*

"The care of the body and the care of the soul are not two duties, but two parts of one duty."

—*Phillips Brooks.*

XI

KEEPING THE BODY YOUNG

Youngness of body is menaced continually by foes from without and within. The very earth seems against us! Gravity is in league with the old-age demon. It is ever trying to get the better of us, to make us yield the erectness of youth and become bent, stoop-shouldered—old, physically. We must in very truth "brace up," muscularly and mentally, if we would not be worsted by it.

Some of the foes from within that work for our physical downfall are fatigue, exhaustion, apathy, ennui, and all introspective trends of thought, be they sad or otherwise. Whenever the nervous force or physical vitality is subnormal—from any cause whatsoever

—or when one is "buried in thought," the muscular tendency is toward a relaxed, semi-unalive condition; the chest tends to sink, the torso to sag, the shoulders to droop, and the head to incline forward. It matters not whether the person be a lad of fifteen or a woman of seventy; the *order* of bodily expression is the same in either case. The degree of relaxation, of course, depends upon the intensity of the inciting cause.

Gravity, physical and mental subnormal states and all introspective trends of thought! Formidable and unavoidable foes, you say? True enough, and we can insure the maintenance of our youngness against their lifelong assaults only by habitually living above the line of least resistance. This means that we cannot self-indulgently "float with the current," or "let things slide," or "laugh and grow fat," or "trust to luck." If we would live above this line of physical and mental decadence, we must row against tide and weather, must shape things and events that relate to our welfare, must resist the fat

disease, and we must know that the only luck on which we can safely depend is the luck that persistent self-effort brings.

Lest the idea of ceaseless effort be discouraging to some, let it be stated at once that the most effectual means for the retention of our bodies' youngness is to cultivate two simple habits—habits eminently ethical and altogether personally attractive—namely, the habit of health and the habit of cheer and courage.

In a certain sense, these are paradoxical habits. They do not thrive by repetition, nor is their nature toward crystallization; instead, they are often solely dependent upon new thoughts, new activities and new responses to life.

The mental vigor and stimulation implied by the habits of cheer and courage are, in truth, the major part of the subjective side of the habit of health. And a most important side it is! The effect of mind-states upon the body's chemistry is, in its marvelous results, akin to the claims made by the alchemists of

old. The extreme effects of the mind's action are universally recognized. This is evidenced by such current expressions as "trembling with fear," "frozen with horror," "purple with rage," and "bowed with grief." Many physicians to-day, in their diagnoses, are as searching in their scrutiny of mental states as of physical ones; and every one readily recognizes certain conspicuous functional effects of mental states on bodily states, such as arrested digestion from grief, sudden diarrhœa and swooning from fear, and the thumping of the heart under excitement, or its losing a beat under suspense or fright. We do not, however, practically realize that *every* mental state—because of the mechanical interrelation of the brain and the organs of circulation, respiration and digestion—must affect, for better or for worse, the vital processes. "All mental states are followed by bodily activity of some sort. They lead to inconspicuous changes in breathing, circulation, general muscular tension, and glandular or other visceral activity, even if they do not

lead to conspicuous movements of the muscles of voluntary life."*

The vaso-motor nerves—an elaborate system of minute nerves that penetrate the muscular coats of all the blood vessels—are the immediate connection between a depressed mental state and lowered physical tone, as poor circulation. These nerves make it impossible *for any mental state not to affect the physical stamina.* Not only are the circulation and respiration directly affected by our thoughts and emotions, but all of the glands of the system are affected; the digestive fluids may be dangerously polluted or arrested by anger. Such ethical mental states as cheer and courage are pre-eminently wholesome and dynamic, physically. Romanes says: "A prolonged flow of happy feeling does more to brace up the system for work than any other influence operating for a similar length of time."†

* James's "Psychology."

† "Science and Philosophy of Recreation," *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XV.

Just how the habits of cheer and courage are to be maintained in the face of the seemingly untoward and depressing conditions that sometimes confront nearly every one, is a problem with as many different right answers as there are people to solve it. Moreover, each person must ever and again re-solve it because new, unknown factors may daily enter into any personal equation. A few general suggestions are given in the following chapters that may prove helpful toward the mastery of mental states. But each individual must find his or her own way to the spiritual heights where cheer and courage prevail despite near-by clouds.

The habit of health is only another name for the *normal physical state.* All deviations from it are abnormal conditions—the results of the violation of some law of right living. They bear witness to man's folly or ignorance, direct or inherited. The constant renewal of the cells which nature untiringly carries on in man's physiological laboratory is the fundamental basis of the habit of health. Formerly,

it was held that all the cells of the body were replaced by new ones once in seven years. But modern physiology holds that this replacement of cells occurs practically every few weeks. It is, therefore, evident that this renewal of cells affords man an opportunity, in a large degree, to mold his own future. "The constant change of the tissues due to the nutritive process of waste and repair in the body makes new habits possible to the latest day of life, because the new tissue 'sets' itself naturally to the latest 'pathway' and 'tends to corroborate and fix the impressed structural modification.'"*

The harmonious conduct of "the nutritive process of waste and repair," *i.e.*, digestion, and its sister processes, circulation and respiration, constitute health. But in the cultivation of the habit of health, we must seek indirectly, rather than directly, to regulate these vital processes, for they are primarily automatic. Our immediate business is rightly to order certain voluntary activities which, in turn,

* James's "Psychology."

have a tremendous influence on the so-called involuntary processes.

Chief among these acts are: (1) Mental and emotional states; (2) Right use of the body in all necessary daily acts, and (3) Physical exercise.

(1) *Mental and Emotional States.*

The best mental tonic for the vital processes are the habits of cheer and courage. Not " spells " of happy confidence which are more than offset by " spells " of doubt, of timidity and of poisonous fear, but *an habitually positive cheer-courage outlook.* Of course, thinking and feeling are not strictly voluntary acts, but it lies within the domain of one's volitional power to select the kind of thoughts and feelings which shall receive hospitable encouragement.

(2) *Right Use of the Body.*

To neglect, over-tax or in any way to " put upon " the body is an injustice that never fails to beget its legitimate penalty, however

long delayed it may be. When the body is treated with due consideration, it is a willing hand-maiden of the spirit; but when it is subjected to indignities and misuse, the whiplash of the will or some stimulant is necessary to urge it to response and work. Moreover, misuse often transforms it into a complaining, harassing tyrant that prohibits free play of the higher faculties.

It is a tragedy, silent and terrible, to be young in spirit and old in body; to have the desire and ambition to do as the mature-young do, the desire to be an active factor in the world's arena of accomplishment, but to be prohibited by an infirm, worn or painfully rebellious body. It is, in very truth, "a house divided against itself." Bitter, indeed, are the tears of spirit when a person is forced to confess that he or she is responsible for the body's early desertion from the fine battle of life. The way the body is used in the habitual daily acts of life has much to do with its lasting qualities. This flesh machine is not only generally racked but parts of it are weakened,

injured and displaced by rough and unseemly usage; much as similar usage damages an inorganic machine—a watch or an engine.

Everybody knows that muscles grow by use, that prolonged disuse causes them to become weakened and finally atrophied. Everybody must acknowledge, also—when he stops to think about it—that bodily agility, flexibility, dexterity, suppleness, are maintained through exercising the body in unhabitual ways, or, more definitely, in ways different from the routine ways that the ordinary daily acts of man's life necessitate.

The lightness and grace of a dancing master do not betoken that he possesses abilities inherently different from those possessed by a clumsy, slouchy day-laborer. The two men were each endowed with similar possibilities of movement and expression; but for years they have used their bodies in radically different ways, and this difference in use has produced the different results in the bodily expression of the two men.

The bodies of an overwhelming majority

of society women, home-makers, school teachers, sewing girls and domestics are, by the age of thirty-five or forty, awkwardly stiff and set. Their attitudes are uninterestingly ugly, because lacking in ease, freedom and grace. Even their movements are characterized by a woodeny unyieldingness. But there is no constitutional physiological difference between the mass of such women and such a type as Madame Bernhardt. This actress, of upwards of sixty years, is as lithe, supple and as muscularly versatile and responsive as might have been the real, impetuous, poetical boy of sixteen whom she represents in "L'Aiglon." Again, it is difference in the *daily use* of the body and mind that accounts for the difference in effects. The only sufficient use is variety of use—invigorating variety.

Madame Bernhardt never allows a day to pass, no matter how taxing the work of study, travel, receiving, rehearsing and acting, that she does not devote at least thirty minutes to physical exercise which embodies movements other than those naturally required in ordi-

nary daily life. Thousands of women, those, too, who consider themselves cultured, do not devote thirty minutes a month or a year to the training of their bodies for freedom of expression. And their tense or awkward or weak or nervous or corpulent *old* bodies bear witness to this neglect. It is a case of "As ye sow."

A man is as old as his back is.

One can put on or take off twenty years in appearance by the way one stands. A standing or sitting position where the back is hooped outward, the chest contracted and sunken, and where the trunk sags forward so that its weight presses heavily upon the delicate unprotected visceral organs, is most injurious and aging. Such position interferes with the functioning of the vital organs and leads to poor circulation, distressed digestion and insufficient breathing.

To prevent Old-Age Habits in the Daily Use of the Body:—

Stand easily erect without apology or self-

assertion, simply strong, free and self-respectful.

Stand with the weight of the body on the balls of the feet, instead of settling back on the heels.

Keep Nature's double-curve of beauty in the back, instead of a stiff, straight line or a single disfiguring outward curve.

Stand with the chest in front of the abdomen instead of allowing the abdomen to make one look old and heavy by its unseemly forwardness.

Remember that the head is the topmost, not the foremost, part of the body.

Keep the shoulders free from all awkward restraint.

Bend from the hip joints—not from the waist line—when leaning over a desk, table or stove.

Walk with a light, free step and with economy of nervous energy.

Cultivate, in every possible way, lightness and ease in the movements of the body or any part of it. Move the head, hand, arm, trunk,

and the feet, not as if they were leaden weights, but as if they were the willing agents of a happy, young spirit—one that found pleasure in exertion.

Above all, it is essential to learn how to refrain from senseless, destructive muscular tension. Learn how to relax, to let go physically, how to untie the fuss and worry knots. This means the ability to rest, the ability to put ourselves, *at will,* in a condition to gain vital reinforcement than which nothing is more protective of our youngness. The will should act as a governor-valve for shutting off as well as turning on steam in our human machine. It is not the work we do, but the way we work and the energy we waste when we are not working, that exhausts and ages us. The ability to concentrate on one thing to the exclusion of everything else—save as remote "fringe consciousness"—and then completely to drop that before turning the attention to some other activity, is one of the secrets of conserving nervous energy.

Perhaps in this day and generation, one

needs must "step lively" or be distanced in the race. But it is possible to step lively without stress and strain; possible to move quickly without hurry; possible to think effectively without worry. If it should require much time and patience to cultivate the grace which enables one to be "a holy vegetable," now and again, it will be time well invested, for, verily, 'tis a youth-saving grace. As James Whitcomb Riley says:

> "Let us pause and catch our breath,
> On the hither side of death."

(3) *Physical Exercise.*

In order that the habit of health may persist decade after decade, it must be daily fortified by upbuilding exercise. In some way —the more unique and changeful and playful the way, the better for the body's prosperity— every muscle and vital function should be stimulated at least once every day of one's life.

This order of organic stimulation—which is widely different in effect from the inorganic stimulation of drugs and liquors—keeps the

vital organs in tone and makes their chemical processes more perfect; it causes more thorough and speedy elimination of poisonous waste substances; it sends a richer supply of blood and nerve energy to all parts of the organism; it makes the body and brain more resistant to the disease microbes that are ever alert to attack a weak place in our physical defense. By means of it the food nourishes, rebuilds and re-creates the body better than Nature could accomplish these results without such co-operation on our part.

The question now is, what kind of exercise will produce such beneficial results? Many an off-hand answer would be: "Why, farmwork, housework, taking care of the furnace and shoveling off the walks, any kind of good, honest manual labor. Exercise that amounts to something! No fancy folderols are necessary!"

Gladstone found chopping down trees first-rate physical exercise. Tree-chopping is manual labor that brings all the muscles of the body into vigorous play, that creates the im-

perative demand for increased respiration and quickened circulation. As a cure for dyspepsia such exercise is unexcelled, for it especially strengthens and stimulates the trunk of the body and the trunk's vital contents. But much manual labor is of a directly opposite nature. It is restrictive, using only a few sets of muscles. These are often used to the point of exhaustion while other muscular areas are practically unexercised. Again, the position necessitated by many kinds of manual labor, instead of strengthening the trunk as does tree-chopping, is such that the muscles of the trunk are weakened, the vital organs cramped and even crowded out of their rightful places.

Consider such manual workers as farmers, farmers' wives, washer-women, charwomen, navies, miners and factory employees. These are far from ideal types, physically. As a class, they are heavy and clumsy of movement; their bodies early become stiffened, stooped and shrunken; they age early; they wear out early. Verily, " All work and no toy, makes Jack a dull boy "—mentally and physically.

It is the vivifying element of newness in exercise, or the out-of-the-ordinary direction of the nervous energy, that best mobilizes the muscles and quickens the mind and body.

Of course all exercise is, in some degree, stimulative; but any exercise becomes less and less so as it becomes more and more automatic. That is why the exercise of the brain and body attendant upon any routine occupation, from that of the ditch-digger to that of the United States Supreme Court Judge, is inadequate to keep all parts of the organism constructively active and young. To illustrate: Physiologically considered, a movement of the body or of any part of it is worth much or little in proportion to the amount of blood sent to the parts used—these parts being the afferent and efferent nerves, the ganglionic center, whether spinal or cerebral or sympathetic, and the muscle or muscles. Tests of measurement made by the plethysmograph show that the supply of blood sent to the entire circuit by physical movements varies

in a decreasing ratio to the degree of the automatism of the movements.

The activities, mental and physical, attendant upon daily civilized existence, and those attendant upon any line of routine work, become more and more automatic by years of repetition; hence, the blood supply that such activities induce is meager and not sufficient to sustain youthful vitality. On the other hand, unhabitual movements that require the co-operation of the attention and the dynamic will in their execution necessarily involve the sending of a richer blood supply to the parts used. If this supply be generous enough to replace in full measure the inevitable daily wear and tear of living, it is plain to be seen that the depletion of forces concomitant of oldness may long be delayed.

Exercise that makes for the habit of health must be vivifying, not exhaustive; it must be freeing and harmonizing, not restrictive. There must be dynamic will-action behind it. The psychic state of youngness is zest; that of oldness, dull indifference.

All exercise, whether it be games, athletic sports, walking, running, gardening, pitching hay or cleaning house, which is characterized by the play-spirit, is rejuvenating. As children, we unconsciously expressed our vitality and vigorous spirits through spontaneous physical exercise. We ran, jumped, rolled, kicked, tumbled, bent, twisted, wrestled, skipped, stood on tiptoes, on one foot, turned somersaults, frolicked generally. If we grown-ups for even one generation should keep up the frolicsome games and habits of early childhood, innumerable old-age conditions, as well as "the cares that infest the day," would "silently steal away," or, better still, would never put in an appearance.

Outdoor sports and games have lifted years from many a pair of shoulders. It is much to be regretted that only a comparatively few men and women do, or probably ever will, take an active part in them.

If, then, manual labor is inadequate to produce the desired results and outdoor sports are not accessible or acceptable to the large

majority of adult people, some other kind of exercise must be found to rescue the body's youngness. Certain Health Exercises—that can be taken at any time and in any rational costume—seem best to meet this need. Such as simple exercises for general invigoration, relaxation, flexibility and mobility, strength, endurance, symmetry, for developing quick and ready co-ordination, for quieting the nerves and for preventing and overcoming corpulency. These exercises to produce the desired results must not be mechanical and stereotyped—mere dead motions; they should be characterized by spontaneity, individuality and the joy of physical exertion.

It is not the purpose of this book to describe specific physical exercises; but two orders of gymnastics must be mentioned because they are such potent agencies in the retention of health and youngness of the body, and because just to mention them induces some degree of almost involuntary response, so *natural* are they. These exercises are stretching and breathing.

Stretch when you are tired, stretch when you are sleepy, stretch yourself awake, stretch when your body has been in a fixed position for some time, stretch corpulency and settled maturity out of the body, and stretch mobility, grace and beauty of figure into existence. Stretch the arms, stretch the hands, stretch the legs, stretch the back, stretch the sides, stretch the chest, stretch the throat and stretch the diaphragm. Stretch standing, stretch sitting and stretch lying. Work and stretch, laze and stretch. Stretch and yawn, stretch and relax. Stretch! Stretch! Stretch!

As for breathing, suffice it to say that generous breathing is the most urgent requirement for full, abundant life. Meager, upper-chest breathing is a menace to our health and youngness. It is doubtful if there be people who are actually "too lazy to breathe," but there certainly are many persons, even of the bustling, hustling sort, who are too careless, or indifferent, or ignorant to breathe sufficiently to fortify themselves against old-age atrophies.

To counter-check the influence of gravity and of introspective trends of thoughts, not only should Health Exercises be faithfully practiced for a few minutes every day, but the principles of action and control on which they are based should be applied to the use of the body in every-day acts, *every day*.

Obviously, the earlier in life that one begins to practice the means that make for health and youngness, the better, but it is a mistaken idea to think that one "is too old to learn gymnastics" (Health Exercises, not athletic feats). The writer has personally known hundreds of persons over forty years of age—some even over eighty—who, by the practice of Health Exercises and right use of the body in daily acts, have produced transformations youthward hardly credible to any save eye-witnesses. She has seen stooped and shoulder-burdened women and men gradually emerge from the weight of years and stand erect, buoyant, young; has seen old, rounded backs inflexibly set, yield—albeit reluctantly—and regain flexible mobility; cramped, nar-

row chests of adult people fill out and broaden from one to four inches; short waists of grandmotherdom lengthen to ideal proportions; disfiguring corpulency disappear; inert, listless invalidism supplanted by spontaneous, youthful vigor; the heavy, dragging steps of age "shuffled off," and the elastic, buoyant gait of youth become the established order of movement. These are a few of the many outward telltale signs of what may be accomplished by "taking one's self in hand" with a will. Equally noticeable are the mental changes wrought in many persons who have been "transformed by the renewing of their minds" *plus a physical backing of unhabitual, invigorating exercises.*

"Beware of the commonplace, that mood where you yawn and stretch and hunt out your aches and pains as old people do who gloat over disease and decay."—"*Some Philosophy of the Hermetics.*"

"We grizzle every day. I see no need of it . . . infancy, youth, receptive, aspiring, abandons itself to the instruction flowing from all sides. But the man and woman of seventy assume to know it all, they have outlived their hope, they renounce aspirations, accept the actual for the necessary, and talk down to the young."—*Emerson.*

XII

SOCIAL RUTS

One of the social ruts into which years betray the unwary is the looking-backward rut. Those who belong to a *generation that has arrived* must be on guard lest this mental habit of "tedious old fools" gets them in its clutches. Those who belong to the coming generation are self-protected. 'Tis the nature of youth to be anticipatory, as 'tis the tendency of years to be retrospective.

Tendencies, however, are not established conditions; they are driftings, inclinations that are subject to government by the will. It is for each individual to say whether a

given tendency shall be cultivated into an habitual state, or held in leash, or annihilated by counter-check *acts*.

There is imperative need for all who would retain their youth to keep the present moment alive—intensely so. They must stoutly combat the retrospective tendency from its first symptoms. When a man or woman overhears himself or herself saying, "Why, that was a long time ago when I was only so old," or, "Let me see! That must have been more than umpty-umpty years ago," it is time to make a quick turn. "When a man begins to *reminis,* he is getting old."

We should look forward to life—to the life of to-day and to-morrow—not backward at life. Past days, events, things and associations have had their innings. The present day issues claim the diamond now.

Socially, one of the best ways of keeping in touch with this-world, present-day issues is to have active sympathy with the coming generation; sympathy that makes their interests, ambitions, aspirations, accomplishments and

joys our own. Then may we, too, keep "coming." New stimulus always brings new reactions and growth. Parents desirous of giving their children everything for their best growth can do nothing wiser than to grow and develop with them.

In "The Luxury of Children," E. S. Martin happily says: "The boy coming home from school for Christmas holidays adds new turns to the language of the family vocabulary, acting in various ways like a fresh lump of yeast in the family dough." Lives unleavened by any new fermenting stimulus from one year to the next cannot escape becoming stale, old.

An effectual way of putting one's self outside the pale of young people's companionship is to harp on the themes "When I was young," and "In my day." Are not these "your days," and mine, whatever our ages happen to be? They are, unless we fail to relate ourselves to them because our only vista on life is from the looking-backward rut.

History—political or personal—must be of vital, dramatic nature to be of more than passing interest to the young mind whose natural bent is to look forward, not backward. "The good old times" were doubtless all right in their day, but every young person believes that these present times are better than any old ones. Assuredly, they are the living times with which the young and mature alike have to deal.

There is the insidious temptation—especially to people of small affairs and contracted experience—to try to make one's self or one's personal interests, the chief object of everybody's attention. It would seem as if very many people were suffering from an unintermittent run of a disease that might aptly be called the Personal History disease.

Sometimes this disease appears in an inoffensive, albeit an uninteresting, form; those thus afflicted give detailed accounts of their trivial past experiences, and present intents and doings to any and all who will listen. More often the Personal History disease ap-

pears in virulent and vulgar form, where not only personal acts and what "he said" and "I said" are rehearsed, but where, also, physical ailments, past, present and expected, are shamelessly exploited.

This disease is not dependent upon weather, place or season. It breaks out at any time on the slightest provocation. To give a civil "How do you do?" greeting to a person whose brain is infected with it is risky. One is in danger of being deluged with a minute account of aches and pains, "symptoms" and "developments"; or even of being made the unwilling recipient of harrowing confidences about "my operation." While the mention of a physician, a nurse, a hot-water bag, climate, travel, or anything whatsoever remotely associated with some physical inharmony is enough to start the Personal History disease raging at high temperature.

If good taste, refinement and consideration for others are not sufficient to make people positive against this malady, then self-interest and one's future welfare should do so. Re-

picturing sickness, suffering and sorrow is extremely devitalizing, aging. In "Mind Building" Dr. Elmer Gates says: "Wearisome, unpleasant memories weaken the health and do not generate thought energy. They should be expelled by a crop of pleasant memories. This process of upbuilding by substitution can be applied up to the period of decrepitude."

There is no denying that life ever tends toward the personal. Each individual is more interested in self than in any one or anything else. Even the self-sacrificing mother is devoted and self-sacrificing because it is her pleasure to be so. But, while each person is the center of his or her world, only those who are morbidly personal make self also the circumference of their world. It is worthy social service to sidetrack people when their conversation starts off on any Self line. Justice to one's self demands that one switch them off on another line, if possible, when they begin to unload their woes wholesale upon one.

A friend to whom this conversational side-tracking had been suggested, writes of her experiment with a summer guest. She says: "Mrs. A—'s life seemed pitched in a minor key. I determined to strike for a major. Every time she commenced on a doleful recital of past events I managed to change the conversation, to introduce some subject of interest that was alive, right here and now. (Oh, how I hate these catacombs-habits of thinking and living! With never 'a glad' for the sunshine of to-day!) Whenever she sighed—which she did often—I immediately called her attention to something cheery, or 'comfy,' or funny. Dear! dear! How my bump of ingenuity has been exercised! I made her *do* things, too, instead of moping and thinking that she was miserable—the children, the dog, the enticing weather and the lake were my allies. Result: Before the end of the first week she had brightened up perceptibly; second week, symptoms improving; third week, a critical point. I proposed an all-day's rowing excursion up the lake.

She agreed, although 'she hadn't been on the water since she went into mourning.' Then I took my courage between my teeth and told her it was time *to come out of mourning*. She looked startled and went upstairs; but when she came down ready for our trip she was wearing Margery's white sweater. After that it was easy sailing (by land as well as by sea). At the end of two months she was rejuvenated. Why, she was positively gay, almost hilarious at times! And she looked fifteen years younger. Poor dear! She had exiled herself so long from the joy of being a part of TO-DAY that her spirit was starved and her body discouraged." This is a good illustration of the effect of Lecky's prescription: "By throwing their whole nature into the interests of others men most effectually escape the melancholy of introspection; the horizon of life is enlarged; the development of the moral and sympathetic feelings chases egotistic cares."*

How many people exile themselves by self-

* Lecky's "Map of Life."

centeredness not only from the joys of the present hour, but into dreary, unresourceful oldness! "Excessive grief is the enemy to the living," says Shakespeare.

The rut of details tempts people of narrow interest. Of course, there is no positive harm in attention to details; in fact, many commercial positions are chiefly a matter of attending to details, while in all unselfish associations every one must give due heed to various kinds of details. But to circumscribe one's interests to the petty details of ordinary daily "goings on" is negatively harmful. It shuts out wider sympathies and dwarfs one's growth. It cramps and dulls the power of attention and, in consequence, one's character and one's physical well-being inevitably suffer. Timidly egotistic people are especially given to verbal details. They are miserable if they do not receive the approbation of their associates and they seem harassed by the perpetual fear that they may have been "misunderstood," so "explanations" are ever the order

of the hour. Their tiresome, detailed explanations of unimportant happenings and remarks often cause them to lose the very approval they seek.

Doers who are making history, here and now, have no time to listen to wearisome details where the main idea "is lost in a labyrinth of words." A mass description of all ordinary happenings, or even an indirect reference to them, is usually sufficient to make one's meaning clear, and is certainly much less wearing on the listener than is a minutely detailed account. With which woman would you rather live, the one who builds the fire, fills the teakettle and puts it over, grinds the coffee, sets the table, poaches the eggs, makes the toast, calls the family to breakfast and sees that every one is helped to what he or she likes, or the woman who gets breakfast and serves it?

The rut of sameness is another social pitfall. Gelett Burgess has recently christened those who are mired in it "Bromides." He

says: "The Bromide has no surprises for you. When you see one enter a room, you must reconcile yourself to the inevitable. No hope for flashes of original thought, no illuminating, newer point of view, no sulphitic flashes of fancy—the steady glow of bromidic conversation and action is all one can hope for. He may be wise and good, he may be loved and respected—but he lives inland; he puts not forth to sea. He is there when you want him, always the same."*

One of the reasons why little children are such objects of interest to all right-hearted adults is because their new acquirements, their progressive infantile imitations of our own acts and expressions, have the charm of the new, the unexpected. Suppose that a little child, one who was exceedingly "cute," "dear" and "roguish," was always cute, dear and roguish in the same way; that it had no variety, that for weeks and months it learned no new tricks. Would we not grow

* Gelett Burgess's "Are You a Bromide?"

tired of its expressions as we would of an intricate mechanical doll that could do some marvelous antics times without end, but could do never a new thing?

Repetition unleavened by variety always leads to diminution of attention. Fascinating people are those whose action, thought and mood we cannot anticipate, in whose presence we are always prepared for the unexpected; who lure us to realms of fancy away from the humdrum, who charm us by their resourcefulness, their versatility of sympathy and interest.

It is far from complimentary to say that a person is "always the same." We know just what to expect—the same stale, old ideas, views, complaints, prejudices, attitudes, mannerisms, tones and inflections. To feel that one can always rely on a person, that he or she is absolutely sincere and loyal is, of course, the only basis for enduring friendship; but, as we love living, let us have variety of objective expression throughout the whole emotional gamut. Even such high virtues as

optimism, cheerfulness and kindness may lose much of their potency if they always appear in the same guise.

There are many people to-day who partially, at least, realize that depressing and antagonistic mental states are as unhealthful as they are unethical. But not a few of these same people are so insistent in advocating "right thinking" that they become as irritating with their stock phrases, "Don't worry," "All is good," "Have faith," and "Cheer up," as the habitually pessimistic person is spiritually depressing. One may even nag about such altogether useful things as rubbers, overcoats, umbrellas, flannels, hours of sleep and articles of diet. A devoted mother sometimes loses "her hold" on her half-grown son because she is persistently too solicitous concerning his welfare. Were her affection to take a different form of expression, were it to give the boy a chance to be the protector instead of the protected, her influence would be more secure.

Another rut that must, indeed, be guarded

against "as we would guard against the plague," is the rut of iteration—the habit of telling the same incident or experience again and again to the same person or persons. Iteration and reiteration are pre-eminently signs of the mind's infirmity, of loss of co-ordinate memory. We all know people in their dotage—may right living save us from it!—who will tell the same incident over twenty times in a day and be quite innocent of having mentioned it. Such maundering is one of the tragedies of old age which makes the heart grieve.

But no indulgence is warranted toward people still in the strength of their years and vigorous in mind who allow themselves to fall into this most tedious of habits. Nothing is more irksome, more exhaustive to the faculty of attention, than to listen to these egotistic repetitions. It takes large courtesy to endure such trials of patience patiently. And may it not be mistaken courtesy, ultimate unkindness, to listen without protest to the unthinking iterations of a friend or acquain-

tance? Should we not drop a hint of the dangers ahead?

Well would it be for each of us, if we were blessed with such outspoken companions as a little five-years-old friend of mine proved herself to be. This free little soul was standing quietly by the window apparently giving no heed to the conversation of her older sister and a young gentleman caller; but when the young gentleman began to relate some incident which he had told during a previous call, she turned to him and ingenuously said: "Sister knows that. You told it to her the other day."

It is an unwritten law, in a certain family of goodly numbers where the spirit of chumminess is the presiding genius, that each one shall be protected by the others from the social sin of iteration. Each one is monitor over the rest. If any one commences to retell an incident or experience, some member is sure to hum, "One, two, Buckle the shoe," or to call out, "Once, twice and then again," or significantly to hold up two fingers. No

one enters into this anti-rut custom more heartily than does the seventy-three-years-young grandmother. Every person has need to be an alert self-monitor in order not to be betrayed into this aging habit of reiteration.

There is also an uninteresting sameness in our daily movements. In a little social gathering a woman seated herself on a stool near an open fireplace as unconsciously as a child would have done so. A gentleman caller glancing at her and then at his complaisant, conventional wife who, according to "good form," sat stiffly erect, he smilingly said: "I beg your pardon for being personal, but I must say I like the ease with which you sit wherever you want to. I should expect the stars would fall if my wife were so to make herself comfortable." Ruts! ruts!

How many adults sit, stand, turn, walk, move the hands, head, hips, shoulders, eyebrows and lips, do all physical expressions in the same way, with little or no variation throughout the whole day! No wonder we often look stupid and are so.

How about the emotional life of people whose voices are deadly monotonous—often monotonous on a high strained key? Monotony of effect, monotony of cause! If the outer expression is dull, so is the inner feeling. If I had to choose a companion from a score of strangers, I should choose one who had *vocal variety,* for I should know that there was mental variety behind it. We may well pray to be protected from the friend who has no intellectual and emotional "stops" and "variations."

If any person doubts the tendency of people in general, and of himself or herself in particular, to get into the rut of sameness in daily social intercourse, let such one question those persons whom he or she frequently meets when off guard, so to speak. Could not the grocer, butcher, laundress, dressmaker, tailor, milliner, the janitor, postman, bell-boy and office clerk give unmistakable character sketches of the different people whom they serve? Indeed, yes, if they were sufficiently imitative.

Reader, think of a score of your friends or

acquaintances. Cannot you readily pigeonhole nearly all of them according to their habitual trends of thought, their habitual tones and their habitual bodily expressions? One is always narrowly critical; one is absorbed in petty household tribulations; one is full of business—the stock market, insurance, buying and selling, everything brought to the scale of dollars and cents—one is always hunting for the mote in the eye of some one else, never seeing the beam in his own eye; another is interested in reforms; another is forever making a diagnosis of his or her physical condition; another is given to inventorying the misfortunes or scandals in his or her circle of acquaintances.

Occasionally one meets people from the Isle of Enchantment, where ruts are unknown. People who are young and lovely of spirit, no matter how many years they have lived; who are interested in art, music, literature, the stage, travel, philosophy, reforms, settlement work, and incidentally, but sufficiently and wisely, in personal matters—in business or in

housekeeping: people who give freely, ungrudgingly of their inner, best self. To pass an hour in such a person's society is as invigorating as to breathe ozone from the mountain-tops.

One of the social arts that makes most for youngness of life, is the art of lending ourselves generously, sympathetically, to people and in being positively, not passively, related to the immediate interests of the hour. Nearly all persons whose actual interests seem limited and exclusively personal, have enough *possible* interests to make them delightful companions. They should squarely face their social attitude and bestir themselves mentally to improve it. Expression—out-giving of one's self—changes the possible into the actual. Interests grow by food and exercise as does the body.

Would you, my prosaic housewife, make your social contribution less monotonous, more worth while? When next a friend calls to see you—either because she is fond of you or because she wants to square up her society

debts—greet her in new fashion. If it has been your custom for years perhaps to say in a matter of fact, unemotional way, "Good afternoon; I'm glad to see you," say, instead, in your cheeriest tone something after this order: "Hello, dear! It's jolly of you to come to see me to-day! Let's sit here in the sunshine and play we haven't a care in the world." Omit the customary dole of petty domestic problems. Instead of talking about your cook, or the weather, or disease, or neighborhood gossip, introduce topics of general interest. Speak of some work of art, some public movement; discuss the latest novel and compare it with "Adam Bede," or call her attention to a paragraph by some favorite author; ask her opinion about the "Psychology of Mobs," or name an afternoon for her to spend with you reading Shakespeare. Tell a funny story or incident. Sing a snatch of an old song and ask if she remembers the rest. Show her an exercise for keeping the body supple or for preventing corpulency. Do anything that is different from your customary

social output. Seize the opportunity to contribute something worth while, socially, for the gift of your friend's time and attention.

Such manifestation of freshness of interest, of aliveness on your part, will assuredly increase your charm as a hostess. Moreover it will be a direct step upward for you and your guest out of the rut of trivial, unworthy social commerce. "It is very easy to be dull. It is very easy to give your second-best, to be less excellent than you might have been. It is very easy to decline accomplishments which require hard work, to decline a health and beauty which ask the price of sturdy living, to decline human service which involves an overflowing measure of love and skill. It is very easy to call laziness patience; to call meanness prudence; to call cowardice caution; to call the common-place the practical and mere inertia conservatism."*

Emerson says, "Almost all people descend to meet." But why should they? The best one can give is none too good for a friend.

* Henderson's "Education and the Larger Life."

Richness of life comes not by being exclusive, but inclusive in our sympathies. The art of living a beautiful, helpful life with one's kind, in the home and the community, is the highest art of all, is the highest achievement of civilization. Such living requires constant obedience to the Biblical injunction, "Be ye renewed by the renewing of your minds." Unless the mind is frequently renewed, one soon becomes a social dead-weight—old, irrespective of years.

"Old age is to feel but half, and feebly, what you feel."—*Matthew Arnold.*

"It makes a tremendous difference what people are thinking about as they carry on their work. The principle of thought-direction is the basis of all scientific pedagogic effort."—*C. Hanford Henderson.*

XIII

DOMESTIC RUTS

"When in Rome do as the Romans do"; that is, drop your old habits, your old way of doing things whenever you go into a new environment. Drop the old, embrace the new, if you would see Rome.

Change of scene, new environment, new associations with nature, art and people are transforming, rejuvenating agencies. They help to deliver us from the same old stimuli and the same old reactions, mental, emotional and physical. How often do people come home from a foreign trip, or from a visit to some part of their own country that was foreign to them, or from a month's camping in the pine woods, feeling "made over"!

As a general thing people who travel much,

business men and women who seize vacation opportunities as eagerly as they seize business opportunities, bear fewer and less ugly earmarks of their profession than do stay-at-home people. But if we fail *to do* "as the Romans do when in Rome," we shall miss the chief benefits of the new environment. When we take home and business cares and habits with us, why, Rome is not really a new environment, only our old environment taken into a new locality.

Men and women, the latter especially, need to be emancipated from the house rut. New stimulus to thought, emotion and action is not dependent upon travel or a new locality. It is ever just outside our own door.

No reactions are more wholesome and vivifying than those which result from hours spent in "God's great out-of-doors." Yet, "pity 'tis, 'tis true," thousands of women who virtually command their time are so enslaved by the *tyranny of things*—the making of things, the doing of things, the collecting of things, the care of things, the worry

about things—that they seldom have a free hour for self-realization and refreshment out in the great organic universe. No prophet ever saw with clearer vision than Emerson when he said, "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." This was concretely brought home to me to-day in a letter from a friend, a woman of unusual ability and clear discrimination. She writes: "I am busy, too busy. It troubles me to find that circumstances do not seem to make much difference, either. I am forced to conclude that the *habit* is upon me of taking on a little more than I can do, so that the situation always seems to be driving me instead of my controlling the situation."

The soul of many a woman who is early growing old gives unconscious echo to Richard Hovey's words:

> "I'm sick of four walls and a ceiling.
> I have need of the sky.
> I have business with the grass."

A paying business for every man and woman, a need common to all humanity!

The monotonous, inorganic stimulus afforded by "four walls and a ceiling" is the primary cause of much of the nervousness and the aging irritability to which civilized woman is heir. The change most needed is from the inside to the outside of her own door.

To say that one "has not the time" to enjoy a glorious spring morning, or a walk through the fields, or an hour under the trees, is equivalent to saying one "has not the time to keep young." How many otherwise sensible women are guilty of moral short-sightedness when it comes to an issue between things or appearances and their own "spiritual hygiene." The young wife who, fagged and jaded, was putting in the remnant of her nervous energy, one sweltering August afternoon, on a new gown, is only a type of a large class. In reply to her husband's remonstrance, "Do stop sewing, my dear! You look so tired and worn," this young woman replied, "Yes, Henry, I know it, but one has to if one's clothes are to look fresh and pretty."

The magnetism and vital exhilaration of outdoor life looses the shackles of senseless conventionalities and lets one's spirit come into its own. But here, as everywhere, the individual must do his part. In order to gain most he must give freely, must respond. As we accustom ourselves more and more to respond to the sky, the sunshine and the pure air—be it warm, cold or damp; as we lend ourselves to the sensuous beauty of the pure outline of the mountains against the sky, the flicking light on tree-trunks in the woods, the color glory of the sunset; as we yield ourselves more and more to Nature's upbuilding influences; as we breathe more deeply and let go the strain, contraction and worry of business and of indoor life, increasing delight and multiplied reactions will attend the hours spent out of doors.

People living in the country often fail to receive the richest influences from their environment because they are not sympathetically, may I say, spiritually, related to it. They see no poetry in their surroundings, only dull

prose. " The good brown earth " is common dirt to them.

Outdoor life is commonplace to any individual in just the degree that he fails to give quickened response to it. Nature sings her songs for all, but people must be awakened in sense and soul to receive in full the ministrations of which John Muir writes: " Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into the trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves."

Life indoors, also, may be varied and interesting or monotonous, benumbing and aging. Some may claim that whoever does housework must, perforce, get into a domestic rut; that housework, at its best, is monotonous, and that it is impossible to idealize it. We may not be able to put poetry into all kinds of work, but there is a tonic effect in the realization that *any* work is better for us than no work—better for brain and body.

"*My daily task,* whatever it is, *that is what mainly educates me.*"* Dr. Henry Van Dyke voices psychological truth when he says, "Work, my blessing, not my doom." Doubtless that perverted mental attitude toward living which one has termed "*the passion for material comfort*" makes housework seem more monotonous to some women than it really need be.

This is not attempting to deny that there is much sameness about housework; so there is about nearly all occupations save those that are of a strictly creative nature. But the element of monotony—that element that makes drudgery of work and so degrades the worker—can be relieved here as elsewhere, if the right spirit is brought to the work. Take, for instance, one feature of housework, namely, the getting of meals: three meals a day for seven days in the week, for fifty-two weeks in the year, for years unnumbered. A monotonous outlook, indeed! How can new interest be provoked? In many

* Gannett's "Blessed be Drudgery."

little ways. Occasionally, prepare an unaccustomed dish, have a meal at an hour other than the habitual one, change the order of the places at the table and allow one of the children to serve or pour the coffee instead of " mother "; reverse the order of courses by serving a delicate sherbet first, or have walnuts with the toast at breakfast rather than for dessert at dinner; surprise the family with a very light meal, say, bread and milk, where they are accustomed to have meat and vegetables; go to a restaurant for an occasional dinner; put some sandwiches into a basket and have an impromptu picnic, or have breakfast on the porch or under the trees with apple-blossoms for a canopy.

Such variation in meals may also serve to keep some of the family from the diet rut. An occasional change of food has been found essential for live stock; certainly, it is more so for human beings.

If for no other reason than to protect ourselves from becoming " cranky "—which frankly means notional, old—we should disci-

pline ourselves to partake of different kinds of food, or of the same kind of food differently prepared. If our eggs have been boiled each morning for a week, that in itself is reason enough why they should now be poached or scrambled. A gentleman visiting a friend sat down to a tempting breakfast of fruit, chops, rolls and coffee. He declined everything except the coffee, saying that he had not eaten a breakfast in ten years without pancakes. He was in the pancake rut.

How conspicuous is our slavery to environment and to mere things when we cannot feel comfortable or "at home" unless all of the little customary details of living are adjusted to our habits and tastes! A woman who had not lived more than fifty-five years, but had lived those in a very narrow, perpendicular groove, received a hint that doing every-day acts in different ways was conducive to youngness. On Sunday she conscientiously started out to experiment. At church she sat in the middle of her pew instead of the end, as was her wont. The following day in relating her

experience, she was emphatic in denouncing the idea of doing accustomed acts in a new way. She said that as long as she sat in the center of the pew she felt so out of place that she could not keep her mind on sacred things. Not until she moved back into the corner where she had sat for twenty years did the usual *church feeling* possess her. What a confession of bondage! A place in her pew two or three feet removed from the customary one had power to expel all religious sentiments from the well-intentioned woman's mind! And the worst of it was, instead of learning the lesson, laughing at herself and reforming, she condemned the idea, which if she had continued to carry into motor expression, would have made it possible for her to worship in any attitude or any place.

Blessed be anything that lessens bondage to the habitual in our daily objective life!

Fashions have been railed at as entailing a waste of time, money and nervous energy, but ever changing fashion has also another order of influence. Dr. George E. Vincent

says: "Fashions help to prevent social insanity, the constant change keeping the people from going crazy."

A radical change in costume sometimes acts like a magician in transforming the wearer's very self. Golf, tennis and outing suits have brought new motor reactions in their train. They have put to rout not a little stiffness and aging staidness. Picture hats and their more demure relatives have been missionaries of youth and beauty to many a woman who, before succumbing to their transforming witchery, had been addicted to prim, severe bonnets. It is a social contribution to make a person look, act and feel younger. All hail to new styles of dress—especially to becoming ones!

The change in the color and expression of women's clothes, which has quite generally come about during the last few years, is significant of the growing tendency among women to cling to their youth and to postpone the appearances of old age as long as possible. More white, and more colors—softer and

lighter—are worn by them than formerly. The stimuli to the brain from these colors cannot fail in being more vivifying than that received from the leaden grays and dead browns that were so prevalent up to a score of years ago. Fortunately, too, the reign of black as the garb of mourning, which has so long prevailed, is being questioned by many people, and strongly opposed by some. Black is so unalive, gloomy and hopeless in its expression! Its reactionary effect upon the feelings of those whose hearts are heavy laden must be depressing, even though its influence may be unrecognized. Moreover, an unrelieved black dress has a marked aging effect on the face of the wearer. Not all girls in their teens are superior to its effect. It is unkind to all save youth that is literally "round-cheeked," while it is positively cruel to thin faces with sharp features, and to faces deeply carved or furrowed by suffering. Black intensifies with a deeper shadow every hollow and line of the face, and gives the features a hard, drawn expression.

Those who would avoid old-age conditions should have the courage to get rid of clothes and other things that have been associated with soul-harrowing experiences—tragedies, sickness and death. Does such procedure seem, at first thought, hard and unfeeling? It is simply sane, sensible, psychologic. One's memory and imagination are unwholesomely stimulated by the sight of things having tragic associations. These reminders lead one to dwell upon past agonies, that, in justice to the present hour and to one's future, should be kept out of the foreground of consciousness.

To be "near" and wear shabby, ugly old clothes when one can afford suitable new ones is economy that results in loss, instead of gain. Such parsimony, while anticipating a rainy day that may never overtake one, makes one look and feel old, mean and out-of-place in the sunshine of to-day. Worst of all, it shrivels the spirit. How impossible it is to conceive of a generous-spirited, open-minded miser.

Another domestic rut is the furniture rut.

Many people have a certain chair in which they habitually sit. Frequently a chair becomes distinguished as "mother's chair," "sister Clara's chair," "Uncle John's chair." Such specifically pre-empted chairs usually have their particular places in the room from which they are seldom moved.

It takes no gift of prophecy to foretell where we shall find certain chairs, and who will be occupying them in certain homes. Domestic animals are likewise reliable. The same cow goes to the same stall with great regularity every night. Dogs habitually find the same soft spots on the floor. But cows and dogs are not accredited with aspirations toward intellectual progress, nor are they supposed to be able to reason, to will, to have the power to weigh and to choose. They can afford to become largely automatic in their reactions, but with thinking, loving, willing, progressive man it is different.

A woman who is swiftly traveling the road toward early oldness, recently moved into a beautiful new home. A friend who knows

her well remarked: "When Mrs. M—— once gets her furniture placed and the pictures hung, it is done for a lifetime. There is no such thing as change with her. She is too set." We all know these precise, exact, painful housekeepers—*old women,* every one.

An appreciation, half-humorous and half-pathetic, of his wife's setness was evidenced in a letter from a gentleman to his sister, who had visited them a few years before. She had asked if they still had the same lamp. He wrote: "Yes, the same lamp on the same mat on the same table, and the table on the same spot in the same carpet."

Furniture, pictures, people, need new lights, new settings, to bring out all their variety and beauty. It is newness—change of activity, change of relation to things as well as to people—that affords the stimulus to new brain impressions and to new bodily reactions.

A most charming seventy-odd years young woman laughingly said, when a gentleman rose and suggested that he had her easy-chair:

"*My* chair! I haven't any chair. I scorn to have a chair. Any kind of a seat—a bench, three-legged stool, straight back- or easy-chair—is all the same to me. I have seen too much of life to allow myself to get into a chair rut."

That tells the whole story. We get into chair ruts, drinking ruts, eating ruts, sleeping ruts, dressing ruts, working ruts, and even recreation and amusement ruts. The salvation of our youthfulness requires that we unflinchingly abandon these well-worn grooves, and direct our daily footsteps into unaccustomed byways, if not highways.

"Few causes age the body faster than willful indolence and monotony of mind—the mind, that very principle of physical youthfulness.—*James Lane Allen.*

"Everything centers in the emotional life. To stunt and cripple and repress that is to make impossible a full life in other directions. Kill it and you have the dead souls of the social world. In childhood the emotional life is strong. Here, I think, and not in Florida, is to be found the fountain of perpetual youth. We should never grow old if in our hearts we could keep always the full flood of feeling. It is the drying up of this part of our natures that makes possible the dreadful indifference and paralysis of old age."—*C. Hanford Henderson.*

XIV

THINKING AND FEELING RUTS

A kind of mental laziness which for lack of a better term may be called *inertia of the will*—disinclination to vigorous mental effort—is, perhaps, the chiefest of all the causes of old age. It is easy to dawdle mentally; for no will-action is required when the wheels of thought aimlessly revolve in accustomed grooves. Such come-as-you-please thoughts are practically automatic—the undirected response to some stimulus.

Directed thinking to some definite end—which is the only kind of thinking that makes for the retention of mental vigor—requires effort. "If you are going to use your mind,

use it with all your heart. Thinking is almost a lost art in our country," says Edward Howard Griggs. A virile will takes the initiative; it is pioneering, daring and definite. Inertia of the will manifests itself in such mental habits as treadmill thinking, mooning, vain longings and wool-gathering.

During the early part of life, the strong stimuli afforded by school and college study and sports, by the first few years of aggressive business and professional life, and by the novelty of home-making are sufficient to keep the brain quite generally active; but as time goes by, the early stimuli no longer stimulate. The result is that the average person of forty years thinks and feels principally in ruts; and thoughts and emotions control his acts.

It is well, occasionally, to take an inventory of our stock of ideas, of our staple lines of thought, and to close out those that have become " dead stock." To make room for the new, the old must go—old prejudices and superannuated ideas as well as outgrown clothes and old business methods.

True, this is setting a task that is difficult for some natures. But what matter, if growth follows! It may even seem like losing a part of one's very self to give up certain long cherished ideas, for one's opinions and habits of thought are very intimately associated with the real primary "me." But if one's mental furnishings have become shabby, no matter what their associations, they must be discarded. "Angels must go, that archangels may come."

If there be people, as 'tis reported, who are "intellectually and spiritually immune to a new idea," the knell of their youth has already sounded. Continued aliveness of the human mind is dependent not alone on vigorous exercise in some direction, but equally so on diversity of exercise. In fact, too exclusive thinking along any one line jeopardizes the mind's adaptability—its power of rebound from shock and stress. All of the so-called "faculties" must be frequently brought into play, else the mind as a whole suffers.

No other part of our psychical equipment

needs more discreet guidance than does the imagination. "Not the logical faculty, but the imagination, is king over us," says Carlyle. The imagination is the creative power of the mind, and as such plays the leading rôle in many a life-drama. Its creations are by no means confined to symphonies, poetry, pictures, wonderland romances, nor to discoveries, inventions and scientific investigations. Many a person who would declare and honestly believe that "he had no imagination" is largely controlled by his imagination, which not infrequently is perverted and distorted.

Suspicion, cynicism, hypersensitiveness, hysteria, morbidity and insanity are some of the misshapen children of perverted imagination. The fear rut—and who does not occasionally slip into its miasmic depths?—is crowded with people whose imagination has been allowed to run wild. Having no legitimate field of exercise, the imagination plays fantastic havoc with everyday affairs. Mothers worry themselves cross because the imagination suggests possible catastrophes and malig-

nant epidemics. Wives fret themselves into unloveliness because an idle imagination makes mountains out of molehills. The unemployed rich imagine themselves into invalids.

Regular habitués of the fear rut fear the impossible as well as the possible. They fear the things that have been, that are, that are to be and are not to be; thus do they exclude present joy and invite future misfortune. People fear old age and dependence; and by so doing they not only hasten oldness, but, in imagination, live in the poor-house to-day. These are the poor in spirit who are not "blessed."

Every person who worries is, in some degree, the victim of a perverted imagination. For what is worry but mentally crossing bridges before one comes to them, or, in imagination, repeatedly rehearsing something that has or has not occurred? A friend to whom this suggestion was made, said: "Yes, that is quite true of the many needless worries in which people weakly indulge, but what about

worry where there is warrantable cause for it?" There never is warrantable cause for worry; every intellectually honest person must acknowledge that by no process of reason can worry be proven to be advantageous or justifiable. Worry is loss of mental poise as much as a fit of temper is and, also, quite as devitalizing. Squarely facing a difficult situation, whether it be a temporary one or an abiding one, and clearly thinking out the best possible way of meeting it with the resources at one's command, is a radically different mental process from worry—the one is organically constructive, the other organically destructive. A gentleman, who has had to meet many exacting situations during the past few years, gives the following recipe for overcoming small worries and for escaping the worst effects of a "warrantable" worry: "To overcome an army of small worries, let a big one enter the field; to escape insanity from a single big worry, get several of equal intensity."

An atrophied imagination means, at best, a commonplace, unresourceful Gradgrind

person; one who deals in "nothing but facts," whose mental reach does not extend beyond the immediate report of his five senses. The *practical* is the only goal for which such a person strives—he is incapable of seeing those that are beyond. Practicality is a sturdy and a worthy characteristic, but it is by no means the whole of character. Every nature needs somewhat of its steadying influence. Without such ballast one is, indeed, poorly equipped for life, for one is then subject to every erratic, visionary impulse, to every passing whim. But to allow one's self to be buried in the rut of practicality means death to one's higher powers.

Ruts of self-depreciation, self-pity and satiety are some of the other thinking and feeling ruts to which wayfarers surrender their youngness. Self-depreciation is a kind of paralyzing negation. Continued indulgence in it produces physical inertness and loss of vital tone, while its mental effect is to obscure the judgment and gradually undermine the will. Often, it is his will that a self-slandering per-

son attacks. He seems to find a weak will a convenient scapegoat. He—not infrequently it is she—will say in excuse for any shortcoming, "Oh, yes, I know; but my will is weak. I can't help it." Every time one so thinks and speaks, the power of resistance, mental and physical, is lowered a jot. If I were to realize that the muscles of my back or arm were weak, would it be rational for me to say, "Well, I will strengthen them by persistently dwelling on what weak, good-for-nothing muscles they are?" Certainly not; rather, it would be the sane thing to say, "If they are weak, they must be strengthened by judicious exercises that shall invigorate them and rebuild their tissues."

Apply the same line of reasoning to mental states. I recognize that my will is vacillating or halting. How shall I strengthen it? Certainly not by dwelling upon its weakness. The right psychological treatment would be to make and re-make a positive statement. To think and say: "My will can be toned up by exercise and it's going to be. I cannot

afford to go back on myself." "There is nothing more palsying than doubt and unbelief. The mere belief that we can do a thing becomes an extra cog in the power applied to move the wheel of progress."* Of course, the expression of belief in one's will should be immediately justified by one's doing something that requires some degree of determination.

Nothing can be said in extenuation of that particular form of will-inertia whose manifestation is self-pity. Ralph Connor calls it "the last and most deplorable of all human weaknesses."

The rut of satiety is one of the most hopeless of thinking and feeling ruts. Two kinds of people are found therein, those who are decadent and those who affect the blasé state. It is the *pose* of the latter to be "deadly bored" by life. The real blasé state is mental wornness—pitiable oldness. It is next to impossible to inspire people who have become thus degenerate with even a desire to rise

* Halleck's "Education of the Central Nervous System."

above their subnormal state, much less with the will to do so. They have no interest in work, people, books, art, current or historic events. Such a mental state is dangerously enervating, physically; unfortunates of the blasé type soon become passé. Is it not a tremendously sad thing to have worn out—or to think we have—the great variety of world interests?

Years, rightly lived, should bring a multiplication, not a relinquishment, of interests. Even that which is very familiar contains something new for us if our senses are not holden. The musical scale has only eight fundamental notes. Every piece of music illustrates the new use of the old—from new combinations arise new harmonies. Surely, this world and the wonders and mysteries thereof are sufficient to hold one's interest for one lifetime—stretch the span as best one may.

Certain emotional ruts lead precipitately to old age. These are ruts of anger, malice, envy, jealousy, suspicion, despondency, sad-

ness and grieving. A significant incident is related of a great singing master who smiled serenely when a would-be prima donna, beside herself with rage, abused him in the presence of others. To the remonstrances of a friend, the master replied, " I shall have my revenge in seeing her grow old."

Antagonistic feeling, of whatever order, is aging. It is physiologically contractive, inhibitive; it interferes with the free functioning of the vital processes upon which health and youth depend. Depressed feeling of whatever order is aging. It is physiologically enervating; it lowers the tone of the entire system. Hopeful, joyous feeling of whatever order is upbuilding. It is physiologically magnetic and vitalizing; it especially relaxes the muscles of the arteries and bronchial tubes, thus promoting free circulation and respiration; it makes for the harmonious activity of the whole organism.

We cannot afford to carry chips on our shoulders, nor unkindness in our hearts, nor afford to be morose or despondent, nor afford

the "luxury of grief." The boomerang tendencies of thoughts and actions are suggested by Whitman when he says:

"The song is to the singer and comes back most to him,
The teaching is to the teacher and comes back most to him,
The theft is to the thief and comes back most to him,
The love is to the lover and comes back most to him,
The gift is to the giver and comes back most to him,
It cannot fail."

Youngness is likewise imperiled by emotional apathy and repression. All higher emotions—joy, love, hope, courage—are physically vivifying. No venture is more hazardous than to assume a Micawber-like attitude toward matters of the heart. If, in our superior self-estimate, we think to reserve our sympathy until something worthy of it "turns up," we shall waken some day to the bitter realization that we have lost the power to feel keenly, that we are hard and old at heart. Neglect a faculty, and in time it will neglect you.

It is the part of higher selfishness and worthy living not to allow ourselves to be

either indolent or ignorant concerning the mind's and body's welfare. As the years crowd, the greater is the need to provide new stimuli for vivifying reactions.

Who shall say if such new stimuli were abundantly provided during all the " days of our years " that our bodies need ever fall into fatal decrepitude? Does some one protest: " It is foolish optimism to suggest such an unscientific possibility. With advancing years the body must, perforce, lose its plasticity. More lime accumulates in the bones and even the walls of the arteries take on old-age characteristics "? Perhaps these physiological transformations are not preventable and, then, perhaps they are. It will take a few generations of people who have lived according to the habit of the unhabitual, to prove whether these changes may not be chiefly due to the combined effect of " disadvantageous " mental states upon the re-building functions of the body, and the habit of subnormal activity in our physical, thinking and feeling selves.

Dr. Madison J. Taylor says: " The stiffen-

ing of the tissues which is the sign and accompaniment of age, is warded off by exercise. Self-indulgence in lazy ways is the sure way to senility." Sir Henry Thompson, the oldest member of the Royal College of Surgeons, England, "was still in the professional harness" at eighty-four, and declared that "his joints were quite free from any stiffness, being as supple and mobile as they were in youth." Did natural law make an exception here? Hardly. From some natural cause this effect *naturally* resulted. May not science hope to penetrate to the cause and then command the effect? If by different orders of treatment the shells of walnuts can be made to grow thick or thin and cacti to grow with or without spines, is it not reasonable to believe that man's brain and body will show marked effects from a new order of psychologic and physiologic treatment? Perhaps long before the millennium, the answer will be given by experience.

Meanwhile, to-day faces us. How we react from the stimuli it offers will materially

affect our own future history. Any one who, for a few years, personally makes the test of getting out of ruts and keeping out, the test of cultivating the habit of the unhabitual in thought, feeling and act, will be persuaded that such living makes for protection against infirmity, decrepitude, senility, and "precocious old age." And, better than knowing this fact, he himself will be a personal demonstration of it.