powers in middle life or even in old age. It is the nature of some minds as of some plants to arrive at maturity at different stages of life—some in springtime, some in full summer, and others in the autumn. At the same time, men often do not show what they can successfully accomplish because the opportunity has not yet presented itself. Though Cæsar did not attain to power until comparatively late in life, he had as a youth distinguished himself for his personal courage. He was made ædile at thirty-five and consul at forty-one, after which, at forty-two, he took the command of the Roman forces in Helvetia and Gaul. At fifty-two he fought and won the battle of Pharsalia over Pompey, who was then fifty-eight. Yet Cæsar was even greater as a statesman than as a general; and in his capacity of dictator, and afterwards as emperor, he, more than any other man, stamped his mind upon the policy and history of Imperial Rome.

Oliver Cromwell was far advanced in life before he gave any indications of his remarkable capacity as a soldier. He had experienced nothing of warfare before he was forty. He was first made captain of a troop at the age of forty-three, and a colonel at forty-four. In the following year, when placed in command of the Parliamentary horse, he was mainly instrumental in winning the victory of Marston Moor; and at forty-six he won the battle of Naseby. Indeed, as a soldier, he never lost a battle. At the age of fifty-four he was chosen Lord Protector of England.

One of his ablest coadjutors was Colonel, afterwards Admiral Blake. He was middle-aged before he abandoned the quiet life of the country gentleman. After distinguishing himself as a soldier he was put in command of the Parliamentary fleet at the age of fifty-four, and in that capacity he met Van Tromp, who carried a broom at his mast-head in token of his sweeping the sea of the English ships. Blake compelled Van Tromp to haul down

his broom; for he met him in the Straits of Dover, attacked and beat him, and compelled him to fly. Van Tromp was dismissed from his command, and was superseded by De Ruyter and Cornelius De Witt. But they fared no better at the hands of Blake. He made prizes of the Dutch homeward-bound merchantmen, cleared the Channel of the Dutch ships, and drove their fleet into port. Van Tromp was again appointed admiral, and crossed the Channel to meet Blake's forty ships with eighty men-of-war. Blake was beaten on this occasion, and Van Tromp hoisted his broom again. But not for long. Blake put to sea again with eighty ships, and after a long fight, which continued during three successive days, Blake drove the Dutch fleet into Calais, with the loss of eleven men-of-war and thirty merchantmen. He also joined the final battle between Van Tromp and Generals Deane and Monk, in which Van Tromp was killed. Admiral Blake did other great services to the Commonwealth, and continued to uphold the valor of the English fleet. He died on board his ship while entering Plymouth Sound on his return from Cadiz, at the age of fifty-nine.

Dandolo was elected Doge of Venice at eighty-four. When ninety-four and blind he stormed Constantinople, and was elected to the throne of the Eastern Empire, which he declined, and died Doge at ninety-seven. Washington was in his ripe middle age before he entered upon the great career of his life. Dumourier was over fifty before he found a stage for his military abilities, and then he had all Europe for his spectators.

Old Radetzky, the Austrian general, did not achieve his great victory at Novara until he had reached the age of eighty-three. He had seen much service before, but had never had an opportunity of distinguishing himself. He bombarded and took Venice after three months' heroic resistance; he was then appointed governor-general of the

Austrian provinces in Italy, and did not retire from his profession until he had reached his ninetieth year.

Lord Clyde, though he joined the army in 1808, and was at the battles of Vimiero and Corunna, had to wait long before he attained the position of colonel. He was nearly fifty years old when he embarked for China in the command of the 78th Regiment. He was sixty-two when he was appointed to the command of the Highland Brigade in the Crimea, and sixty-five when he did his crowning feat of delivering Lucknow and quelling the Indian Rebellion.

Von Moltke, at the ripe age of sixty-six, was scarcely known. He had long before written a history of the war between Turkey and Russia in 1828 and 1829; and in the English translation of the work, published in 1854, Von Moltke was referred to by the editor as "a captain in the Prussian army, since deceased." Yet the great strategist lived to win the battle of Sedan at seventy. Soldiers who have had no opportunity of distinguishing themselves may take courage at the thought.

Some men have failed in one thing and succeeded in others. Addison failed as a speaker and as a dramatist; his first play of *Rosamund* was hissed off the stage; but his papers in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator* are the most charming essays in the world. Otway failed as an actor, but his drama of *Venice Preserved* was an immense success. Sothern, the well-known actor, once said in public that the early part of his dramatic life was chiefly occupied in getting dismissed for incapacity.

Many literary men of eminence might be mentioned who have emerged from obscurity into fame late in life. Sterne, unnoticed before, published his first work, *Tristram Shandy*, at forty-seven, and his *Sentimental Journey* at fifty-five. De Foe published the first part of his most popular work, *Robinson Crusoe*, when he was fifty-eight. Richardson did not begin to produce the novels upon

which his fame chiefly rests until he was fifty: he did not finish *Clarissa Harlowe* until he was near sixty. It is true that, when a boy, he was distinguished for his flow of invention in telling stories to his schoolfellows, "all out of his own head." At the same time he was a favorite with the girls in the neighborhood, who got Richardson to write love-letters to their sweethearts.

Fielding wrote *Tom Jones*, and Rousseau *La Nouvelle Héloise*, at about the same age that Richardson wrote *Pamela*. Dr. Johnson's *Lives of the Poets*, perhaps his best work, was written three years before his death, in his seventy-fifth year. Ben Jonson died at sixty-three, and on his death-bed he wrote his exquisite pastoral fragment *The Sad Shepherd*. And Longfellow wrote his ingenious and delicate poem *De Senectute*, which he delivered at Bowdoin College on his seventieth birthday. The Queen of Roumania has said, "La bonté des enfants est angélique, mais la bonté des vieillards est divine!"

John Speed, the historian, published his first book in his sixty-sixth year, having up to that time maintained himself by plying the trade of a tailor. The elder Scaliger, who was in early life a page, and then a soldier, did not apply himself to learning until late in life; and the first of his numerous works did not appear until he had reached his forty-seventh year. Lamarck, the celebrated botanist and zoologist, entered the French army in his seventeenth year. He served as a soldier for fifteen years, and was engaged in many battles, distinguishing himself for his bravery. At length he was grievously wounded and compelled to retire from military service. He was about forty when he published his first work on botany—having been employed under Jussieu at the Jardin des plantes. He began to give lectures at fifty, and continued them for twenty-five years. Although he became blind and infirm, he continued as studious and laborious as ever. His last

work, *Memoires sur les Coquilles,* was prepared with the assistance of his daughter, and he died at the advanced age of eighty-six.

Scaliger and Lamarck were both soldiers in early life. It is remarkable how large a number of eminent men have obtained their habits of discipline, obedience, and labor from their early training in military service. The career of arms, instead of being a hindrance, may actually be a help in future life. Drill, discipline, obedience, and courage are useful in every vocation, and possess a powerful influence upon the formation of character. At all events, they develop the power of disciplined concentration which is essential to the display of true genius. Look, for instance, at the following brief list of distinguished soldiers: In Greece—Socrates, Æschylus, Sophocles, Xenophon; in Itally—Julios Cæsar, Horace, Dante, and others; in Spain and Portugal—Cervantes, Calderon, Camoens, Lope de Vega, Ignatius Loyola; in France—Descartes, Maupertuis, De la Rochefoucauld, Lacepede, Lamarck, Paul Louis Courier; in England—Chaucer, Ben Jonson, Philip Sydney, Algernon Sydney, George Buchanan, Davenant, Farquhar, Lovelace, Withers, Otway, Bunyan, Steele, Sotheby, Cobbett, Murchison. It was the intention of the celebrated John Hunter to enlist as a soldier, when his brother William invited him to London to assist him with his anatomical dissections. He made so much progress that, at the age of twenty-seven, he was admitted to a partnership in the lectures. It was not, however, until his forty-fourth year that he published his first work—the introduction to a *Treatise on the Teeth.* After that period, his contributions to medicine, surgery, and physiology, were numerous, original, and of great value. John Hunter's museum is, after all, his best monument.

Among late authors may be mentioned De Bonald, who,

according to Saint Beauve, was forty before he thought of writing, or dreamt of becoming an author. William Hutton of Birmingham did not become an author until he was fifty-six, after which he wrote fourteen works, the last of them in his eighty-fifth year. The Rev. W. Kirby wrote his *Bridgewater Treatise on the Habits and Instincts of Animals* in his seventieth year. A few years later, he published his *Fauna Boreali Americana,* and died at ninety—showing the peaceful tendency of naturalistic pursuits.

There are many instances of marvellously gifted old men, who seem to have been proof against the decay of age, and even of the ravages of disease. Disraeli has said that old age has been a thing unknown to many men of genius. They have preserved their sensorial and intellectual faculties to the last days of their life. Plato died, pen in hand, at the age of eighty-one. Cato learnt Greek after his sixtieth year—some say at eighty—in order to read the Greek dramas in the original.* Cicero composed his beautiful *Treatise on Old Age* at sixty-three, the year before his violent death. Galileo finished his *Dialogues on Motion* at seventy-two. He was engaged, with his pupil, Toricelli, in continuing the same work when he died in his seventy-eighth year. The minds of these men grew, and

* Montaigne, who disapproved of works in old age, says of this: "That which they report of Cato amongst other things, that in his extreme old age he put himself upon learning the Greek tongue with so greedy an appetite as if to quench a long thirst, does not seem to make much for his honor; it being properly what we call being twice a child." [*Essays*, Book ii. c. 28: "All things have their Season."] Elsewhere he says: "Sometimes the Body first submits to age, sometimes the Soul; and I have seen enow who have got a weakness in their Brains before either in their Hams or Stomach" [Book i. c. 57; "Of Age."] And again: "Maturity has its Defects as well as Verdure, and worse; and Old Age is as unfit for this kind of business (authorship) as any other; who commits his Decrepitude to the Press, plays the Fool, if he think to squeeze anything out thence that does not relish of Dotage and Stupidity. Our wits grow costive and thick on growing old" [Book iii. c. 12: "Of Physiognomy."]

widened, and deepened with time. "It is a poor wine," said Lord Jeffrey, "that grows sour with age."

Among the other old men who have learnt new languages, for improvement or for amusement, were Dr. Johnson and James Watt. They wished to test whether their mental faculties had become impaired with age. Johnson learnt Low Dutch at seventy-one, and Watt learnt German at seventy-five. Both mastered those languages, and found that their faculties were unimpaired. Thomas Scott began the study of Hebrew at fifty-six; but Goethe was sixty-four when he began the study of Oriental literature. He did at eighty-three with all his powers of thcught and imagination complete.*

Late in life, Lord Camden, after he had been Lord High-Chancellor, learnt Spanish, with the object of reading the romances in that language, having exhausted those in English, French, and Italian. Alexander von Humboldt wrote the last page of his *Cosmos* in his ninetieth year, and died the month after its completion. The veteran Leopold von Ranke continued his labors at the rate of eight hours a day even in his ninety-first year; and his last writings were almost as good as his first.

Some writer has said, that after the age of forty the brain receives no new impressions; but students far advanced in life may be comforted by the fact that Dr. Priestley knew nothing of chemistry until he had reached that age. Writing to Sir Humphrey Davy, when in his sixty-eighth year, Dr. Priestely said: "As old an experimenter as I am, I was near forty before I made any experiments on the subject of air, and then without, in a manner, any previous knowledge of chemistry." He discovered oxygen gas in his forty-first year, and nitrous gas, carbonic-oxide gas, fluoric-

* Dr. Cumberland, the learned Bihop of Peterborough, when eighty-three years old, was presented by Dr. Wilkins with a copy of his Coptic Testament. The bishop, like another Cato, at once began the study of the language, whch he speedily mastered.

acid gas, muriatic, and other gases (now called by different names) in subsequent years. Dr. Thomson has said of him: "No one ever entered upon the study of chemistry with more disadvantages than Dr. Priestley, and yet how few have occupied a more distinguished station in it, or contributed a greater number of new and important facts."

The great astronomers have mostly lived to be old men, in full possession of their faculties. They have found work to be the divine consoler of age. They are strong to endure, as well as strong to hope. We have already mentioned Galileo, who dictated his last work when blind and physically helpless. Hevelius watched the heavenly bodies with ardor until seventy-six; and Copernicus until seventy. Newton wrote a new preface to his *Principia* at eighty-three. Flamsteed, Hally, Bradley, Maskelyne, and Herschell, all lived to be old men. And Mrs. Somerville, author of *The Mechanism of the Heavens*, gave to the world her last new work, *Molecular and Microscopic Science* at the ripe age of eighty-nine. When it was objected to Delambre that the successive parts of his *History of Astronomy* contained numerous corrections, amounting to dissertations on the matter of those which had preceded them, the veteran replied, "I have a very short answer: I began this undertaking at the age of sixty-three; I am now seventy-two, and if I had waited to begin printing until I had nothing to add or to strike out, the work would have been lost."

Great statesmen and judges have been for the most part long-lived. The truth is, that nothing preserves life so much as a strong interest in life. Dull men disappear, but active men live on. Exercise of all the faculties is necessary for health; and this is as true of the old man as of the young. Idleness leads to the degeneracy of the muscles, heart, and brain; and the rapid waste of the intellectual powers. Dr. Lordat, the celebrated physiologist

of Montpelier, affirmed that it is the vital, not the intellectual principle that is seen to wane as old age throws its autumnal tinge over the green foliage of life. "It is not truth," he said, "that the intellect becomes weaker after the vital force has passed its culminating point. The understanding acquires more strength during the first half of the period which is designated as old age. It is therefore impossible to assign any period of existence at which the reasoning powers suffer deterioration."

Lords Eldon, Brougham, Lyndhurst, and Palmerston, were eminent in their age as in their youth. Eldon died at the age of eighty-six, and remained in the full enjoyment of his wonderful intellect until shortly before his death. Brougham seemed long to defy time and death, though at length, in his ninetieth year, he succumbed to the great leveller. Lyndhurst, on the night that he entered his ninetieth year, addressed the House of Lords in a speech of incomparable clearness, lucidity, and ability—showing that his powerful intellect was setting without a cloud. Yet he lived for two years longer, clear and simple-minded to the last. Palmerston was one of the youngest men in the House of Commons. He was an Old Boy to the last. He continued the gay, buoyant, ever-youthful hero of debate, and was a thorough type of the working statesman. He was "always in a triumph or a fight"; and work seemed to stimulate, intensify, and prolong his vital energies. He was Prime Minister for a greater number of years than any man in this century excepting Lord Liverpool, and retained his marvellous popularity to the last. Men believed in his consistency, truthfulness, honesty, and patriotism: he died Prime Minister in his eighty-first year.

Law administrators have almost been as famous for their capacity of living as law-makers. Sir Edward Coke fell from his horse at the age of eighty. His head lighted upon

"sharp stubbes," and the horse fell upon his body. Yet he lived for more than a year. The last few days of his life were spent in preparing his numerous legal works for publication. Sir Matthew Hale resigned the chief-justiceship of the King's Bench at sixty-seven. Mansfield died at eighty-nine, his mind remaining bright and vigorous to the last. Lords Stowell, Hardwicke, Camden, and Campbell, lived to be very old men. Indeed, some of the judges have continued in the performance of their duties so long as to occasion much dissatisfaction amongst the rising members of the Bar. Lefroy was Lord Chief-Justice of the Irish Bench until his ninetieth year. His long continuance in office was made the subject of discussion in the Irish press, as well as in the House of Lords. And yet, as he always said, his judgment was as good, and his experience even greater than ever. Chief-Baron Pollock was almost driven from his position by the clamor raised in the English press. He retired at eighty-three, and amused himself with photography, becoming President of the Photographic Society. He never ceased to take the greatest interest in mathematics. His death occurred four years after his retirement, in his eighty-seventh year. We must therefore be a little cautious, as Lord Chelmsford said in the House of Lords, "in measuring the mental capacity of old age: it is never too late to begin, and it would appear that it is never too late to end."

Work, not idleness, leads to enjoyment. Idleness consumes men more than rust does iron. It leads to degeneracy and waste of vital power. The idle man slides out of existence from sheer want of anything to cling to. What a waste of life is his who has no favorite books, no store of thoughts, no happy recollections of what he has done, experienced, or read. The tallow-chandler who went back to his tub "on melting days" is better than the retired rich man with "nothing to do." The evening hours of life may be the

most beautiful, as the fairest leaves of the flowers are those which the bud the last discloses.

We have spoken of the case of James Watt. During the early part of his life, while occupied with his inventions, he was, like Carlyle, afflicted with dyspepsia, was subject to racking headaches, and was often ready to be rid of life altogether. But as his years advanced his troubles left him, and in course of time he enjoyed the pleasures of a fine old age. He read the books that he loved the best, varied his enjoyments with inventing, planting, or excursions to London and Wales. He no longer "cursed his inventions," but lived over again his old schemes, and made new ones. "Without a hobby-horse," he said, "what is life?" When at Edinburgh, in his eighty-second year, he met Sir Walter Scott, Lord Jeffrey, with many others; and "the alert, kind, benevolent old man," as he is described by Sir Walter, delighted them with his cheerfulness not less than he astonished them by the extent and profundity of his information. "It seemed," said Jeffrey, "as if every subject that was casually started had been that which he was specially occupied in studying." He went on inventing and perfecting his inventions to the end, presenting to his friends the first copies of the busts made by his copying-machine, as "the productions of a young artist just entering his eighty-third year." In the following year, James Watt quietly slipped away, amidst the tears of the mourning friends who assembled round his death-bed. "I look upon him," said the poet Wordsworth, "considering both the magnitude and university of his genius, as perhaps the most extraordinary man that this country ever produced; he never sought display, but was content to work in quietness and humility, both of spirit and of outward circumstances, in which alone all that is truly great and good was ever done."

After all, age is but the shadow of death; yet, during

life, duty can find an infinite outcome. The true preparation for old age is a pure life and faithfulness to duty. These are the solid results of a lifetime, no matter how long or how short it be. The winter of life cannot be one of discontent, but of hope, and joy, and everlasting peace.