opinions of the true source of knowledge. It was sufficient that he was satisfied with the fountain of his inspiration; and if the Editor of the "Lancet" was satisfied with his *employé*, though we might regret it, we felt that it was his concern, not ours.

The British Medical Association and the responsible Editor of the Journal occupy towards the profession a different position. The Journal is the recognised organ of the Association, and it is of great importance that the tone and character of its articles should not be unworthy of the members. In this instance the Council have properly disclaimed the offensive article, and we therefore, while regretting that such an article should ever have been allowed to appear in the Journal of the British Medical Association, have now only to express our satisfaction at the result.

Age and Work.

Dr. George Beard, of New York, one of the authors of the work on "Medical Electricity," which we have noticed in this number of the "Journal," has been engaged in some interesting inquiries into the age at which the best work of the world has been done. He maintains that the period of life during which man does his best and most effective work is that between the ages of 30 and 50. Basing his deductions upon facts derived from the lives of 800 statesmen, authors, men of science, and representatives of every department of human effort, he divides life into five decades of mental activity—the golden decade being between 30 and 40, the silver between 40 and 50, the brazen between 20 and 30, the iron between 50 and 60, and the tin between 60 and 70. Before 45 at least 70 per cent. of the original cerebral work of the world has been done, and before 50 more than 80 per cent. The golden moment of life, when the enthusiasm of youth is at the maximum and the experience of age tends to support and systematize effort, without manifesting a tendency to retard it, is between the ages of 38 and 39.

Dr. Beard applies these views to legislation, reform, and professional and business life. Statesmanship is intrusted too much, he thinks, to age, to the exclusion of youth, and, as a natural consequence, the science of government, which should be in advance of all sciences, is in reality behind them

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.17.78.234 Published online by Cambridge University Press

all. A law requiring officials to resign office upon reaching the age of 65 would be quite as wise as the law that requires the attainment of a certain age in order to hold office. The history of civilization is a history of the triumph of young radicals over old conservatives, and if it were not for death at a certain period, if life were not limited in duration to three or four score of years, society would retrograde, owing to the antagonism and opposition of the old men. In military history the greatest generals have averaged 35 years, and in the civil war in America the North was defeated in 1861, when the generals averaged 50, and was victorious in 1865, when the leaders were all under 40. In journalism four-fifths of the reading matter of the religious, scientific, and secular press is contributed by men between 15 and 40, and to this fact the profession owes its great influence. With reference to the management of colleges and educational institutions, the policy of putting them under the control of men over 60 years of age is fatal to the true interests of a progressive nation. At 60, every College President should retire under a pension, and in every department of human effort the question of age should be asked in the same breath as that of ability and capacity. With regard to the comparative longevity of brain-workers and muscle-workers, the former live to a greater age, the average age of 500 of the greatest brain men in history being 64. With reference to the comparative achievements of the sexes, the proportion was 50 to 1 in favour of man. No woman has founded a system of philosophy or religion, achieved a great invention, or composed music. The great fields of woman's efforts in history have been polite literature and government.

Montaigne, in one of his Essays, puts the best period of life even earlier, and blames the Emperor Augustus for declaring that a judge should be thirty years old. "This Emperor," he says, "was arbiter of the whole world at nineteen, and yet would have a man to be thirty before he could decide a dispute about a gutter."

> For my part, I believe our souls are adult at twenty, as much as they are ever like to be, and as capable then as ever. A soul that has not by that time given evident earnest of its force and virtue will never after come to proof. Natural parts and excellences produce what they have of vigorous and fine within that term, or never.
>
> "Si l'espine non picque quand nai
> A pene que picque jamai, *
>
> * If the thorn pricks not when it first shoots, it hardly ever will at all.

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as they say in Dauphiny. Of all the great human actions I ever heard or read of, of what sort soever, I have observed, both in former ages and our own, more performed before thirty than after; and oft times in the lives of the same men. May I not confidently instance in those of Hannibal and his great competitor Scipio? The better half of their lives they lived upon the glory they had acquired in their youth; great men after, 'tis true, in comparison of others, but by no means in comparison of themselves. As to myself, I am certain that since that age both my understanding and my constitution have rather decayed than improved, retired rather than advanced. 'Tis possible that with those who make the best use of their time, knowledge and experience may grow up and increase with their years; but the vivacity, quickness, steadiness, and other qualities more our own, of much greater importance, and much more essential, languish and decay. Sometimes the body first submits to age, sometimes the soul; and I have seen men enough who had got a weakness in their brains before either in their legs or stomach; and by how much the more it is a disease of no great pain to the affected party, and of obscure symptoms, so much the greater the danger is.

And for this reason it is that I complain of our laws; not that they keep us too long to our work, but that they set us to our work too late. Methinks, considering the frailty of life and the many natural and ordinary wrecks to which it is exposed, we should not give so large a portion of it to idleness, either in childhood or in apprenticeship to the world.

Insane in Cottages.

We extract the remarks which follow from Dr. Clouston's report of the Cumberland Asylum for the last year:—

Much has been said and written during the past year about a system of boarding out such persons in cottages, and this plan is proposed to be extended to many more of the chronic insane. Nay, some writers on the subject would seem to suggest that all the insane should be so treated. Gloomy pictures have been drawn of asylums, and deep have been the tints in which the misery of their inmates has been depicted; while on the other hand have been represented bright cottage homes of which they would be inmates, happy families of which they would be members, subjected to the softening influence of woman's presence, their lives unrestrained and natural, the healthly influence of public opinion constantly securing them proper treatment. The great and merciful change in medical opinion produced by the writings of Conolly, by which the former chains and mechanical restraints were abolished, and the old Bedlam changed into the modern asylum, it is strongly urged, was only a half-way stage in the unshackling of the

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