

THE FRUITS OF OLD AGE.

Chats on Longevity with Five Septuagenarian American Citizens.

HOW FOUR SCORE MAY BE REACHED.

Temperance, Exercise and Marriage the Watchwords of Would-Be Long Lives—Words of Wisdom from Aged Men.

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WASHINGTON, April 30.—[Special Correspondence to THE BEE.]—In no city of the United States will you find so many energetic old young men as in Washington. Octogenarians and septuagenarians flourish here like the flowers that bloom in the spring, and in most of them, the blossoms of their old age are more beautiful and more fragrant than were those of their youth.

Where will you find a happier or a sweeter life than that of Dr. Scott, the president's father-in-law, who at ninety-one has full possession of his mental faculties and who takes his walks with all the enthusiasm and vigor of a young man of thirty.

Talko Senator Morrill, who over four score, is one of the best working members of congress, and who, long after he had passed his three score and ten, found time to write a book ridiculing the vanities of his fellows.

Senator Payne has reached four score, and there are a score and more of our great men who are leading active lives over seventy and eighty. It is now nearly a year since I began to collect opinions from these men as to longevity, and how young men by following a certain course might reach a profitable and a happy old age.

I have interviewed them as to their habits; as to their use or abuse of intoxicants; as to whether they ate or drank to excess; and as to the thousand and one other things which go towards the destruction of the old man of life. I find that each man has his own theories and that their views are as wide apart as the poles.

SENATOR HENRY B. PAYNE ON OLD AGE. One of the oldest young men in public life is Senator Henry B. Payne. He was born in New York state in 1810, during the first year of Madison's presidency. He was well educated and graduated when Andrew Jackson was closing his first term, and he began the practice of law at Cleveland two years later. He visited Washington city just after his graduation and he talks very interestingly about President Jackson and his visit.

In 1861 he was a candidate for the United States senate and came near being elected at that time, when Benjamin Wade was chosen. He is now over eighty years of age, in perfect health and, though he lives a mile and a half from the capitol, he has made it a practice to walk out to the senate least once a day during his term. When the weather is pleasant he often walks out and back, and his heart is as young as his body. He can laugh like a boy and he enjoys the society of young men.

Upon my asking him to the secret of his health and spirits at this advanced age, he said: "I attribute my good health and long years to a good constitution and to the fact that I control my appetite and am temperate in both eating and drinking. I take exercise regularly, chiefly walking, have but little to do with the doctors and I think I am the better for it. About forty years ago, when I was thirty-five years of age, I was forced to leave off my practice at the bar on account of hemorrhage of the lungs. I had something to do with doctors at that time, but have not had much to do with them since."

"How about your diet, Mr. Payne?" "I eat everything that agrees with me and I think what I like, but to excess. I do not use tobacco, but I don't believe that long life depends on its use or non-use. The main thing is temperance in work as well as in eating and drinking. I believe many men are killed by overwork and worry. Sam Handall died from overwork. He was a splendid preacher but he broke down in working on a tariff bill and by laboring here all summer. I don't believe that activity hurts any one, but overwork does. Then I don't let things worry me. I like life and believe that it is worth the living. I keep myself young by having young men about me and keeping in my swim. I don't know about Adam, but have little faith in the story of Methuselah and the other scriptural characters who are supposed to have lived ten times as long as men live now. There is no reason why they should have done so, and the statement is hardly probable."

"What advice, Senator Payne, would you give a young man who wishes to reach four score?" "I hardly know," said the senator. "I would urge him to be temperate, to study himself, out what agrees with him and refrain from that which disagrees, take life as easy as possible, not worry or overwork. I would advise him to take regular exercise and to keep his eyes on the bright rather than on the dark side of things. The restraining of his appetite and the temperate use of all his faculties will enable him to live longer, though life is after all largely a matter of constitution."

A BACHELOR STATESMAN WHO WANTS TO MARRY. Ex-Senator Thomas L. Clingman is about two years younger than Senator Payne. He is as bright as a dollar and as active as a rearing colt. He has not been in public life much since the close of the war, but he was one of the most noted of our statesmen in the days of Taylor, Polk, Fillmore, Taylor, Pierce and Buchanan, and had one of the famous duels of history with William L. Vanoy of Alabama on account of a speech which he made concerning the temperate use of alcohol. He is a delightful conversationalist and he considers himself still in his prime. Said he:

"I will be seventy-eight years old in a few weeks and I am in perfect mental and physical health. I walk about three miles every day and think I have been growing younger during the last three years. I find that my nails grow faster and tougher and the growth of my hair has increased. I think that the improvement of my health since I have been in the public service is an extract of tobacco which I have invented which stimulates the perspiratory and other organs and opens up the whole system. I am a bachelor, but I have wanted to get married all my life and first fell in love at five. I was wanted to marry since then and I want to marry now more than ever, but I can't afford it."

MODERATE EATING AND DRINKING. "As to my habits, I have been temperate all my life. I do not eat more than half the amount of food that I see others eat. I drink a drop of spirits until I was forty-eight. At that time I tried a mint julep and thought it helped me, and since then I have taken some spirits just before my meals or some wine with my meals. As to my meals I eat breakfast at six o'clock and confine myself to a big cup of coffee, a piece of meat and some stale bread. I am a great lover of water, but I do not like underdone biscuits, and when we have warm biscuits at my boarding house, I send them back and have them re-cooked. The word biscuit means, you know, cooked twice. I am fond of cakes for breakfast for years at Willard's hotel consisted of buckwheat cakes and coffee. At dinner I eat one meat, one vegetable and a light dessert. I am very fond of soap and can make it take the place of meat and do so when it is good. I like to eat, much more than I do to drink. I don't think much of champagne, but I am fond of oysters. When I sit down to the table I look for the bill of fare and decide what I want for me and eat that and nothing else. I never use black pepper, but I like a little red pepper does me no harm."

"How about sleep, senator?" "I sleep about five hours every night and

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A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE.

Justice McArthur is one of the retired justices of the United States supreme court of the District of Washington. He has led an active and hard working life, and now at seventy-seven he does not look as old as his age. He is tall, erect, and blue eyed. There are but few wrinkles in his handsome face, and his hair, though gray, is thick and silky. He has a wonderfully clear complexion, and his eyes are bright and full of life. He is a fine talker, a good liver and an enjoys society as much as when he was twenty years younger. I met him at Saratoga and asked him his recipe for longevity.

"I am," said he, "naturally of a strong constitution, and I attribute my almost perfect physical and mental condition largely to a very good set of digestive organs. I can eat anything and drink anything, and am one of the few men of whom it may be said that they do not know that they have a stomach. I have been so throughout my life, and I attribute my continued health to this condition. In fact, such as I have committed in the past I have always made up for by rest and bathing. If I am up late at night, I take pains to sleep the next morning, and if I am at a big dinner, I see that my pores are thoroughly open the next day, so that any deleterious matters that I may have taken into my system may pass away. I don't believe in asceticism, nor in the mortification of the body by rigid rules of diet, by limiting the amount of food, or by any other means. I believe that man should take as much pleasure out of life as he can consistently with his work, and that the desire for enjoyment is natural and it should be gratified as much as hunger and thirst. The very fact that it exists is an evidence that it is intended it to be gratified. Of course every man must be a law unto himself in such matters, and that which suits one may not suit another."

HOW HE BATHES. "You were speaking of bathing, Justice McArthur. What kind of bathing do you mean?" "I am a great believer in hot air baths," replied he, "and I take them every day. I keep myself in good condition by one of these every week. I think the Turkish bath is good, but my favorite bath is the alcohol hot air bath, which I take regularly when I am at home. When I am away I take the hot water bath, making the water not hot and soaking myself in it until the perspiration flows freely out of every pore of my skin. I don't believe in the use of much soap in bathing, and think that the pores of the skin are not helped by the alkali that is taken into them. Our skin is, you know, made up of thousands of little pores, through which a large part of the waste of the system is carried off. These pores receive every part of the body, stomach, liver, kidneys, and every other part of the system. Each pore has a little oil duct in it to protect it from injury and to keep it in good condition. It is a delicate piece of machinery, and I do not believe this should be treated with soap, nor should the skin be scratched and roughened with a flesh brush."

"Of what nature is your alcohol bath?" "It is a bath of the vapor of alcohol. I take it in my bath room and do it by putting perkins a gill of alcohol in an iron cup. I light it and place it under a chair, then, having undressed, I seat myself over it and throw a large blanket over me and around the chair, making a hot air chamber of myself. In a few minutes the vapor of alcohol rises up, and the perspiration runs out of my pores in streams, washing out my skin and making it perfect clean. When the alcohol is burnt out, I throw off the blanket and jump into my bath tub which is filled with water at a blood heat. After a short stay there I rub myself with a coarse towel, and then complete the driving with a softer one. I then lie down for a few minutes and when I get up I am a new man. Such a bath makes you feel that you have never been so clean before. It removes your whole system and the alcohol acts as a tonic. You get the good effects of a hot air bath, without the burning having precipitated the injurious ones and thus going into your system through the pores as vapor act upon you as a tonic. It is a simple and a safe method, and I do not advise this nor do I think it beneficial."

"As to marriage," said Justice McArthur, "I decidedly think it tends to the lengthening of life, and I would advise every young man to get married. Man needs association. It is in the course of nature, and it seems to me that I have never known who I was before married. As to smoking, the abuse of tobacco is, I think, injurious, but I do not think it hurts to smoke in moderation. I smoke two cigars a day and enjoy them."

"How about exercise?" "The only exercise I take," replied Justice McArthur, "is walking. I walk about three miles a day when in Washington, and I am very fond of it. I usually see the bright side of things, and in looking back at the difficulties I have surmounted in my life, I am surprised at my confidence in myself. I believe in work and not worry, and I think that any young man who will use the criterion of common sense in his life, enjoy it as much as he can, treat himself as he would a good machine and conform to nature and his nature's laws has a good chance of reaching four score and ten."

TWO SEPTUAGENARIAN CONGRESSMEN. The two oldest men in congress are General Vandever of California and General N. P. Banks of Massachusetts. Both are several years past their thirtieth year, but are both as perfectly erect and both possess the highest degree of physical and mental vigor. General Vandever is, I judge, six feet high. He was born in Maryland in 1817, was a brigadier general in the United States army and was a member of congress under James Buchanan was president of the United States. Now at seventy, three he is as active as a rearing colt, and his only sign of age was in the white strands of his sandy beard. Said he:

"I cannot say that my vigor at three score and ten is due to any fixed habits of diet or exercise. I have been a hard worker all my life and I have been ordinarily temperate. I eat as I feel like, and I eat and I lead a regular life. I married at thirty and I believe that marriage conduces to lengthening of years. You ask me what advice I would give to young men who wish to live long. I can only say that they should be temperate in eating, drinking and work, and that they should be ready to take the days as they come and not worry about the future. I believe that exercise in the open air is good and I think every young man ought to get married."

GENERAL N. P. BANKS. General Banks is the straightest man in Washington. He is about seventy-five, and he has led a life full of hardships. He worked on the Erie canal when he was a young man, and on the lecture platform before he was of age and was in congress over half a century ago. He was elected speaker in one of the most noted speakership contests of our history, and he was one of the roughest fighters and of the most vigorous among the union generalists in the late civil war. During the war he was in constant exposure, but he came out of it comparatively a strong man and went again into congress. He has been in congress a number of times since then, and you will now find no more pleasant companion nor philosophic statesman than he. He attributes his health largely to a moderate care of himself and to a good constitution. He believes that the mind has a great influence on the body, thinks that marriage is conducive to longevity and sees no reason why he should not live in good health for years to come. FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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