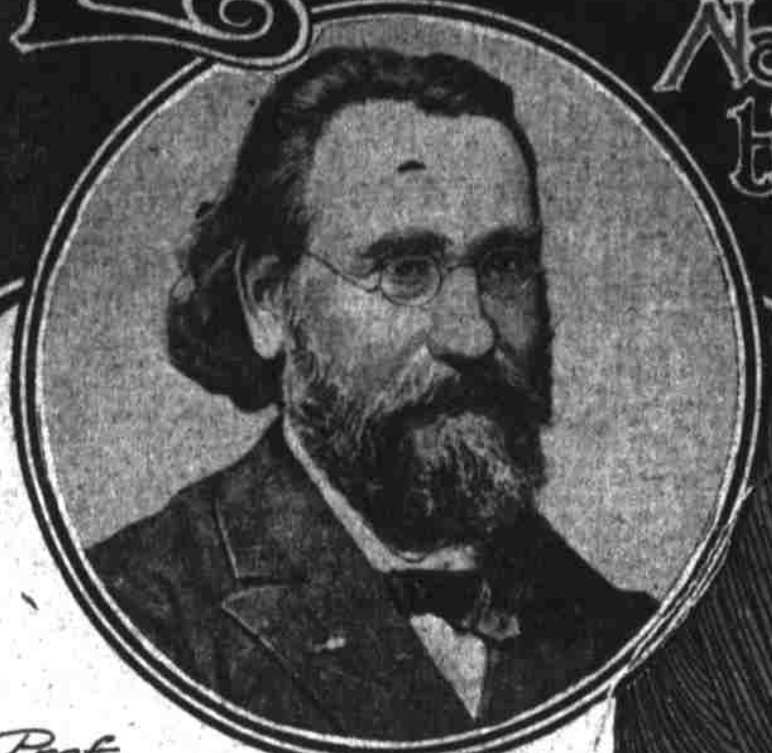


LIVE TILL YOU WANT TO DIE

Natural Death Should Not Come till Man is 150, Says Metschnikoff



Prof. Elie Metschnikoff

SUPPOSE you were able to live as long as you wished, or, in other words, that you would not die until you had naturally developed a desire for death; that you could live to the ripe age of 100, 120 or 150 years—perhaps longer—and retain the vigor and strength of youth!

Imagine a life of healthful activity and pleasure continuing, free of disease, until one had long passed the century mark, and passing away into the eternal slumber like "one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him and lies down to pleasant dreams," without a struggle, without pain.

Many marvels have come with the twentieth century, but nothing, perhaps, more marvelous than the announcement of the possibility of the dream of De Leon. Nothing of more importance to man than a scientific assurance of the possibility of an indefinite prolongation of life.

To live longer—is it not the hope of every one of us? And to live as long as we desire to live—not to die until the desire for death comes as naturally as the desire for sleep—is this not wonderful to contemplate?

Yet such is the latest announcement of science. From no less an authority than Professor Elie Metschnikoff, the successor of the famous Pasteur, and the foremost man of science of the times, comes the word that the only natural death is that accompanied by the desire; that it is possible, barring accident and preventing disease, to prolong life indefinitely and retain one's vigor.

In his latest book, "The Prolongation of Life," the famous biologist continues his warfare on the three enemies of humanity—disease, old age and death. And in a gleeful, optimistic way he brandishes the torch of scientific victory before a startled and eager world.

This is, perhaps, the most important announcement of science for many years.

"Life's pulses now with fresher force awaken
To greet the mild, ethereal twilight o'er me;
This night, thou Earth! hast also stood unshaken,
And now thou breathest, new-refreshed before me,
And now beginnest, all thy gladness granting,
A vigorous resolution to restore me,
To seek that higher life for which I'm panting."
—Goethe's "Faust."

IN THE ancient Book of Kings the desire to rejuvenate old age and prolong human life is expressed; hundreds of years before Christ the Chinese gladly hailed the news that there lay in the sea Fortunato Islands, where geni gave their guests to drink of a beverage conferring immortality.

To an eager and credulous world, Cagliostro, the charlatan of the eighteenth century, declared he had discovered an elixir of life by which he had survived through many centuries.

By the use of preventive measures and rational hygiene, Elie Metschnikoff believes that science will eventually banish disease.

With certain hereditary blood diseases and specific poisons developed in the intestines eliminated and certain rules of diet observed, there can be, he says, an indefinite prolongation of life.

Then there remains but one evil, death, which declares the scientist, is possibly, like sleep, the result of auto-intoxication. Having lived to a vigorous old age, the eminent scientist is of the opinion that man's instinct of life will be replaced by an instinct of death. And his most startling announcement is this:

That man should not die until he develops this natural desire to die!

That his passing away, after completing the perfect cycle of this life, will be one of the most pleasant sensations that can exist.

Banishment of the fear of death. Elimination of the horrible agonies of the last struggle. Dethronement of disease and its frightful, painful ravages. The changing of wretched, ugly, palsied old age to a sweet, healthful, vigorous, active old age. Wonderful assurances!

"In the Melanesian islands," declares Professor Metschnikoff, "old people who have become incapable of doing useful work are buried alive."

"In times of famine the natives of Terra del Fuego kill and eat their old women before they touch their dogs. When they were asked why they did this,



William Maccaabee Celebrated His 104th Birthday in U.S. Naval Home, Philadelphia, last September.

they said that dogs could catch seals, whilst old women could not do so.

"Civilized races do not act like the Fuegians or other savages; they neither kill nor eat the aged, but, none the less, old age becomes very sad."

In many European countries murders of old people, declares Metschnikoff, are extremely common, while suicides of old people are startlingly frequent. In 1878, in Prussia, among 100,000 individuals, there were 154 cases of suicide between the ages of 20 and 50, and 295, or twice as many, between the ages of 50 and 80.

Of suicides in Copenhagen, during ten years, from 1885 to 1895, there were 394 between the ages of 50 and 70; and of the entire number of suicides, 36½ per cent. were of people in the prime of life and 63½ per cent. were of the aged.

And why is this? Why the unhappiness of the aged? You know the degeneration of the body, the horrible shrinking, the senile decay of the powers, the debility of the mind, the inept, helpless condition. Surely old age is a tragedy. But is there hope? Metschnikoff declares there is hope.

"Even among the lowest vertebrates there are animals," he writes, "which withstand the ravages of time much better than man." He cites a giant tortoise of an age of 150 years which shows no signs of age, and one aged 86 years which performs all the natural functions.

Infusoria have been propagated by Ehrhiques to the 700th generation without any evidence of debility.

"How far," asks Metschnikoff, "we are from what should be the true condition of the human race?" And he adds, "Facts justify the conclusion that human beings who reach extreme old age may preserve their mental qualities, notwithstanding serious physical decay."

That many men are well preserved, retaining bodily and intellectual vigor up to the age of 70 and 75 years, leads Metschnikoff to conclude, "It is impossible to regard this age as the natural limit of human life."

AGE NO BAR TO GENIUS

He cites a number of men who produced their best work when they had passed what is regarded as the limit of life, among them Goethe, Victor Hugo, Plato, Michael Angelo and Titian. Besides, centenarians are really not rare, and in France each year about 150 persons die who have reached the age of 100 years.

In 1836 there were living in France 146 centenarians, about one to 220,000 inhabitants, while in Greece there is now a centenarian for each set of 25,641 persons, nine times as many as those in France.

To what age can a man live?

While Metschnikoff believes the reputed age of Methuselah, 969 years, to be a mistake of calculation, he cites the instances of Kentigern, the founder of the Cathedral of Glasgow, who died at the age of 185 years in 600 A. D., and of Pierre Zortay, a Hungarian agriculturist, who died in 1724 at the same age.

Women more frequently live to the hundred-mark than men.

Just what enables people to live to an extreme age, the scientist does not say. Undoubtedly, sobriety leads to long life, yet Metschnikoff records cases where extremely old people were addicted to tobacco, alcohol or coffee to excess. Although it has been asserted that pure, keen air insures longevity, Metschnikoff states that Switzerland, with its mountains and invigorating air, is notable for the rarity of centenarians.

Again, it is interesting to note that most centenarians have been poor people. "There are instances of rich centenarians, such as Sir Moses Montefiore, who died at the age of 101; but such are extremely rare," he declares.

"Poverty generally brings with it sobriety, especially in old age, and it has been often said that most centenarians have lived an extremely sober life. Sobriety is certainly favorable to long life, but it is not necessary, because quite a number of centenarians have drunk freely."

For instance, there was Catherine Raymond, living to be 107, who drank much wine; Politiman, a surgeon, who got drunk every night from his 25th year; and died at the age of 140; Gascogne, a butcher of Trie, who got drunk twice a week, and lived to 120; Elizabeth Durieux, of Savoy, who lived on coffee, drinking forty cups daily, and lived in health to 114; and Voltaire, who, as he himself said, had been "poisoning" himself with coffee for nearly eighty years.

"It is plain that any factor to which long duration of life has been attributed disappears when many cases are examined," writes the scientist. "Naturally a sound constitution and

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Jose Gonzalez El Paso Tex. 117 Years 12 August 1907



Mrs. Mary R. Woods Portland, Ore. Claimed to have Been 120 Years Old Last June.