

Famous centenarians : upwards of two hundred instances of persons who have lived to be 100 years old / compiled by J. Redding Ware.

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Tracts A. 347. (1)
FAMOUS

CENTENARIANS.

UPWARDS OF

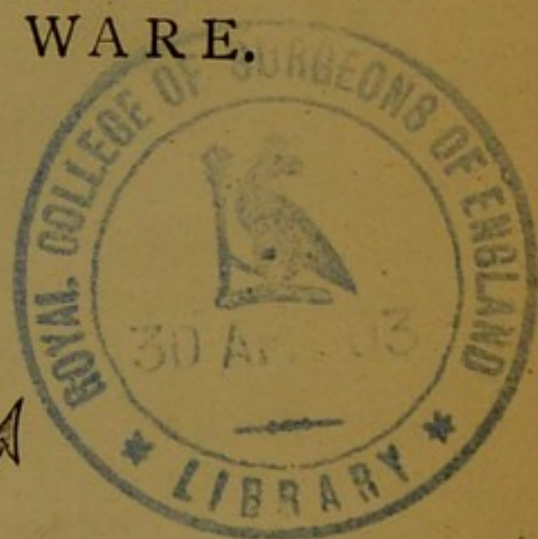
TWO HUNDRED

INSTANCES OF PERSONS WHO HAVE LIVED TO BE

100 YEARS OLD.

COMPILED BY

J. REDDING WARE.



LONDON :

DIPROSE & BATEMAN, SHEFFIELD STREET,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.



CENTENNIAL

TO THE

1801-1901

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P R E F A C E.

IT is to be hoped that "Famous Centenarians" will afford much pleasant reading to aged men and women, and that it will contribute widely to a cheerful view of old age on their parts. It is monstrous for any man, with a crotchet as to the duration of human life, to devote many years to trying to prove that no human being ever passed one hundred years. To do so is to take away the happiness of hope from old people, and to fill their lives with despair. It may be trusted that this present unique collection of instances of centenarianism (many of them proved beyond cavil) will satisfy hundreds upon hundreds of persons past eighty years of age that their lives may be prolonged quite another quarter century; that this book will efface from their minds every despairing doubt as to their being necessarily near death. The compiler of this work is the intimate friend of two gentlemen, both of whom are on the verge of ninety, while they are far more active than most men of fifty. One, Mr. W. West, made his first appearance on the stage (the Haymarket) in 1803; the other, Dr. S——, was a middle-aged man when by chance he was at Kensington Palace when the Queen received the news of the death of William IV. Both these gentlemen have a fair chance of becoming centenarians. Meanwhile, Vice-Chancellor Bacon is in his eighty-eighth year.

Dr. Farr, a very high authority, in his tables of the expectation of human life at various ages, not only accepts one hundred as a recorded

age, but estimates the average duration of life beyond that limit in the case of women, about one year, nine months, and three and a half days; and in the case of men, at about one month less than that time.

Mr. Joseph E. Perkins, of Syracuse (New York) who, perhaps, has not been very careful to sift evidence, has published a work in which he records over ten thousand cases of centenarianism. Indeed, Mr. Perkins claims that there are well authenticated cases of persons who have lived to be more than one hundred and fifty years old.

Mr. C. Walford, who has compiled a very reliable *Insurance Guide*, gives a list of two hundred and twenty persons of whom it has been shown that they lived to the age of one hundred and twenty years and upwards.

One of the most curious facts in relation to centenarianism is that it follows the general rules of longevity. The Registrar-General's returns show that land labourers live longest of all classes of the community, while their nearest neighbours in longevity are the aristocratic and gentry classes. The merest investigation of the cases in this work will show that a similar rule holds good with centenarianism.

As to existing centenarians, the returns for 1881 recorded the deaths of no fewer than ninety-one persons who were registered as being 100 years old and upwards when they died. Of these twenty-five were men and sixty-six women. Nine were 100; four, 101; three, 102; one, 103; two, 104; three, 105; one, 108; while one, who died at Holkham, in Norfolk, had reached 112 years.

It would seem that, as a rule, five women reach one hundred years to every three men—a result which appears to point out that the greater general temperance of women enables them, despite their inferior physical strength and inferior physical activity of life, to withstand the effects of time and decay more thoroughly than do men.

Finally, it may be observed that a careful study of the facts offered in this book will show that while some centenarians used tobacco, others were large meat-eaters, and others drank alcohol in some shape, as a rule, extreme temperance, both as to simplicity and quantity of food and drink, characterised the lives of a very great majority of the instances here collected.

FAMOUS CENTENARIANS.

HENRY JENKINS.

Aged 169. Died 1670.

If Jenkins really lived to this age his memory certainly does honour to Yorkshire as the county which has produced the oldest man since the days of the Patriarchs. It is a legend in Richmondshire (N. Riding) that Jenkins was born in 1501. He certainly died a very old man, as the cautious registrar declared him to be, in 1670. The only authentic account of his life—or account approaching authenticity—is that written by a Miss Savile which must have been penned about six or seven years before Jenkins himself died.

It was first made public in the year 1696, being recorded by Dr. Tancred Robinson in the "*Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society*."—Vol. XIX. The letter itself is preceded by these lines. "A letter giving an account of one Henry Jenkins, a Yorkshireman, who attained the age of 169 years, communicated by Dr. Tancred Robinson, Fellow of the College of Physicians and Royal Society, with his remarks upon it."

Miss Savile's communication ran as follows :—

"Sir,—Mr. Robinson tells me you desire the relation of Henry

Jenkins, which is as followeth :—
When I came first to live at Bolton it was told me there lived in that parish a man over 150 years old ; that he had sworn as a witness in a cause at York to 120 years, which the Judge reproving him for. He said he was butler at that time to Lord Conyers ; and they told me that it was reported his name was found in some old register of the Lord Conyers' meeneal servants, but truly it was never in my thoughts to enquire of my Lord Darcy whether this last particular was true or no, for I believed little of the story for a great many years, till one day being in my sister's kitchen, Henry Jenkins coming in to beg for arms, I had a mind to examine him. I told him he was an old man who must soon expect to give an account to God of all he did or said, and I desired him to tell me very truly how old he was ; on which he paused a little and then said to the best of his remembrance he was about 162 or 163. I asked him what public thing he could longest remember ? He said Flowden Field. I asked him whether the king was there ? He said, 'No he was in France and the Earl of Surrey was general. I asked him how old he might be then ? He said, 'I believe I might be between

ten and twelve, for' says he, 'I was sent to Northallerton with a horse load of arrows, but they sent a bigger boy from thence to the army with them.' I thought by these marks I might find something in histories, and looked in an old chronicle that was in the house, and I did find that Flowden Field was 152 years before, so that if he was 10 or 11 years old, he must be 162 years or 163, as he said, when I examined him. I found by this book that bows and arrows were then used, and that the Earl he named was then general, and that King Henry VIII. was then at Tournay, so that I don't know what to answer to the consistencies of these things, for Henry Jenkins was a poor man, and could neither read nor write. There were also four or five in the same parish that were reputed, all of them to be 100 years old or within two or three years of it, and they all said he was an elderly man ever since they knew him, for he was born in another parish, and before any registers were in churches as it is said. He told me too that he was butler to the Lord Conyers and remembered the Abbot of Fountain's Abbey very well, who used to drink a glass with his lord heartily, and that the dissolution of the monasteries he said he well remembered.

"ANN SAVILE."

Dr. Robinson added :—

"This Henry Jenkins died December 8th, 1670, at Ellerton-upon-Swale. The battle of Flowden Field was fought upon the 9th of September, in the year of our Lord 1513; Henry Jenkins was 12 years old when Flowden Field was fought, so he lived 169 years. Old Parre lived 152 years, 9 months, so that Henry Jenkins outlived him by computa-

tion 16 years, and was the oldest man born upon the ruins of this postdiluvial world.

"This Henry Jenkins, in the last century of his life, was a fisherman, and used to wade in the streams; his diet was coarse and sower, but towards the latter end of his days he begged up and down; he hath sworn in Chancery and other Courts to above 140 years' memory, and was often at the Assizes at York, whither he generally went a-foot, and I have heard some of the country gentlemen affirm that he frequently swum in the rivers after he was passed the age of 100 years.

"'Tis to be wished that particular enquiries were made and answered concerning the temperament of this man's body, his manner of living, and all other circumstances which might furnish any useful instructions to those who are curious about longævity."

Mr. Clarkson, in his *Richmondshire*, tells a strange story as to a land agent (in the service of one Mrs. Wastell) on going to summon Jenkins in some case of litigation, finding in the village a son and grandson of this same Jenkins, both of whom were much more infirm in memory than their ancestor.

The modern objection taken to Jenkins's age is based upon the very true observation that there are only his own words to prove his longevity. Unfortunately at a time before registers were generally and accurately kept, when a given centenarian did not belong to the gentry, and did belong to the lower classes, it is extremely difficult to obtain proof of great age. Is there any internal evidence in Jenkins's conversation with Miss Savile which turns in his favour? At first sight—yes. The references to Flodden Field, the local colour given to those references, the accu-

racy of dates, are remarkable when it is remembered that they were associated with a man who not only could not read or write, but who never had associated with educated people. Assuming his accurate statements as to "Flowden," &c., not to apply to himself, how can his knowledge be accounted for? It can only be assumed that as a child he had heard, perhaps, his grandfather relate his experiences when a boy, of "Flowden," the dissolution of the monasteries, &c., and, in the long course of years, imperceptibly came to speak of them as his own memories, rather than the memory of things told him, that had impressed themselves deeply upon his memory.

It has been urged by Mr. W. J. Thoms that Jenkins may have heard of old Parr, concerning whom a paper and poem had been published by Taylor, the Water Poet, in 1635, that date being many years before Jenkins made his statement to Miss Savile.

It was in 1667 that Jenkins made his appearance as a witness in a tithe case brought by the Rev. Charles Anthony, Vicar of Catterick, against Calvert Smithson, one of his parishioners. Upon oath he gave his age as 157.

Whatever his years, however, Jenkins certainly died at last, in December, 1670, and was buried at Bolton-on-Swale, December 9th, the registration of his death being made by the Rev. Charles Anthony, above named, who appears to have doubted Jenkins's statement, for he avoided all mention of his age. The entry runs "Henry Jenkins, a very aged and poore man, of Ellerton, buried." His wife died some years before him—not particularly aged. There is no record that she had been preceded by a previous wife or wives; Jenkins

therefore either married extremely late in life, or made his years more than they were.

In 1743, Yorkshiremen raised a subscription and an obelisk, to the memory of Jenkins, placed in Bolton Churchyard, whilst the same good friends set up a black marble tablet in the church itself. Upon this tablet runs this inscription:—

BLUSH NOT MARBLE
TO RESCUE FROM OBLIVION
THE MEMORY OF
HENRY JENKINS,
A PERSON OBSCURE IN LIFE,
BUT OF A LIFE TRULY MEMORABLE,
FOR
HE WAS ENRICHED
WITH THE GOODS OF NATURE,
IF NOT OF FORTUNE;
AND HAPPY
IN THE DURATION
IF NOT VARIETY
OF HIS ENJOYMENTS;
AND
THO' THE PARTIAL WORLD
DESPISED AND DISREGARDED
HIS LONE AND HUMBLE STATE.
THE EQUAL EYE OF PROVIDENCE
BEHELD AND BLESSED IT
WITH A PATRIARCH'S HEALTH AND
LENGTH OF DAYS,
TO TEACH MISTAKEN MAN
THESE BLESSINGS ARE ENTAILED ON
TEMPERANCE
A LIFE OF LABOUR, AND A MIND AT EASE.
HE LIVED TO THE AMAZING AGE OF 169,
WAS INTERRED HERE DECEMBER 6TH, 1670.
AND HAD THIS JUSTICE DONE TO HIS
MEMORY 1743.

Clarkson in his "History and Antiquities of Richmond" (Yorkshire), tells the following droll story in reference to the cause "Howe v. Wastell," in which Jenkins gave evidence as to his age:—

"Previous to Jenkins going to York, when the agent of Mrs. Wastell went to him, to find out what account he could give about the matter in dispute, he saw an old man sitting at the door, to whom he told his business. The old man said, 'Ah can remember nought about it; but thee can find feather i' t' house, an' ah do nought doot he'll tell ye arl about it.'

"When he went into the house he saw another old man sitting over the fire, bowed down with years, to whom he put again his question. Only with difficulty could he make this old man understand what he wanted. But after a little time he got the following answer: 'Ah noo nought about it, boot maybe if y'ell go in t' yard y'ell meet wi' feather, who maybe can tell you.'

"The agent upon this thought that he had met with a race of antediluvians. However, into the yard he went, and to his no small astonishment found a venerable old man, with a long beard, and a broad leathern belt about him, chopping sticks. To this man he again told his business, and received such information as in the end recovered the royalty in dispute."

This tale however, is uncommonly like that other Yorkshire history, wherein the enquirer seeing a very, very old man weeping, sympathetically asked what ailed him, when he got this startling answer "Ah be owlin' case feather's been whack-in I for throwin' stones at grand-feather."

In 1865 the news went the round of the press that there was then living in Edinburgh, a man aged 80, who had spoken with a man who had spoken with Jenkins, thus bringing, by the association of one living aged man with the memories of two dead ones, the nineteenth century on speaking terms, if not with the fifteenth, at least with the first year of the sixteenth century.

This wonderful statement may be found in the *Edinburgh Courant* :

"THREE CENTURIES AND A HALF AGO. 'I have seen a man who conversed with a man who fought at Flodden Field,' may be said by a venerable octogenarian gentleman to whom we are indebted for the following most interesting memor-

andum :—'The writer of this, when an infant, saw Peter Garden, who died at the age of 126. When 12 years old, on a journey to London about the year 1670, in the capacity of page in the family of Garden, of Troup, he became acquainted with the venerable Henry Jenkins, and heard him give evidence in a court of justice at York that he perfectly remembered being employed when a boy, in carrying arrows up the hill at the battle of Flodden.'"

It was fought in	A.D. 1513
Add Jenkins's age	169
Less	11
	158
Peter Garden	126
Less his age when at	
York	12
	114
The writer of this in	
1865, aged... ..	80
	A.D. 1865

This account however, will not bear very strict examination. Indeed Mr. W. J. Thoms has completely disproved it. Nevertheless, it is very certain that Jenkins was absolutely a centenarian. How much older than a hundred did he live to be?—is probably an enquiry that will never now be satisfactorily answered.

Jenkins, whatever his age when he died, appears to have been an invalid at an age when his great rival, old Parr, though eighteen years his senior, was still active and vigorous.

It appears that Parr heard of Jenkins (who claimed to be a century old when Parr was 118), and that he determined to see him and went to Yorkshire for that purpose. Jenkins lived at Ellerton.

The legend runs to this tune.

Old Parr walked briskly up to the house, calling in a loud voice :—
 "Eh! does Harry Jackson live here. Ah wish t' see him?"

"Aye" was the reply—"walk in."
 Old Parr it would appear did so, to find a tottering man, with a few hairs clinging to a bald head.

After some talk of by-gone days Jenkins told a tale of his having been sent to Northallerton with a load of arrows to be used at the battle of Plowden.

"That's a good while away" said the visitor, "I do well remember it—I were joost at the time thirty years old."

"Eh! thee moost be old Parr," said Jenkins—and admitted his rival's superiority.

This tale is current chiefly in Shropshire, where they are still proud of Old Parr as a Salopian, and it is told as against Yorkshire which had the honour of producing Jenkins. The Shropshire eulogists go on to say there need be no wonder that Jenkins was astounded, for at that time Parr was active and intelligent, his limbs well made, his face rather "jolly," his eyes keen and bright, and his hair, which was only slightly grey, very luxurious and dressed in large locks down his back.

However, Yorkshire was not willing to be thus wholly beaten on the ground of the power of that county to produce centenarians as compared with Salop. Hence it happens, in Yorkshire, the story goes that shortly afterwards Jenkins grew stronger, and once more plied his trade as a fisherman. It is held in Shropshire that "Old Parr," communicated to Jenkins the secret of his life—that of some wonderful preparation of simples.

Finally, let it be said that Jenkins's case is probably the most doubtful of all the cases of centenarianism

which have, or have not, been investigated.

OLD PARR.

Aged 152. Died 1635.

Nobody doubts that Parr was a very old man, that he was over a hundred. The difficulty is, to accept the assertion, still to be found on the tablet in Westminster Abbey, that he lived to be 152.

Of Parr, his legend declares that he was born at Winnington, Alberbury (Shropshire), in 1483. It is certain that in the year 1635, the Earl of Arundel, who was then visiting his estates in Shropshire, heard of this phenomenon, who was then held to be 152. It resulted that the Earl sent him in a litter to London, where about the end of September he was presented to the King. Within six weeks he died, and on the following day Harvey made that wonderful post-mortem examination of the remains, the report of which created that bright halo of wonderment which gleams about the memory of this wonderful centenarian. From Harvey's surgery Old Parr was conveyed to Westminster Abbey, where he was buried in the south transept.

A perfectly authentic short account of the last days of Old Parr, still in existence, was written by a Mr. Harrison, "a painter," of Norfolk. He wrote :—

"Thomas Parr, died the 5 of November, 1635 (10 Car. 1). The summer before, the Earl of Arundel was at Wem, in Shropshire, and sent for the said Parr (when I saw him and spoke with him), who had then been blind nineteen years, and after two days the said Earle sent him in a litter to the King. And the King said to Old Parr 'You have lived longer than other men, what have you done more

than other men?' He answered 'I did penance when I was an hundred years' old.' The same he told me before he went to the King."

Taylor, the Water Poet, published his metrical life of Old Parr, just two months after the centenarian was laid in Westminster Abbey. How far Taylor drew upon his imagination is a question that cannot now be answered, but he probably did so largely. For instance, he says in his prose preface "His lordship (Earl of Arundel) was pleased to see him, and . . . he took him into his charitable tuition and protection, commanding that a litter and two horses be provided for him, also that a daughter-in-law of his, named Lucy, should likewise attend him" (to London) "and have a horse for her own riding with him; and to cheer up the old man, and make him merry, there was an antique-faced-fellow called Jack or John the fool, with a high and mighty no-beard, that had also a horse for his carriage . . . likewise one of his honour's own servants named Brian Kelley to ride on horseback with them . . . Master Kelley had much to do to keep the people off, that pressed upon him in all places where he came, yet at Coventry he was most oppressed; for they came in such multitudes to see the old man, that those that defended him were almost quite tired and spent, and the aged man in danger to have been stifled."

Further on Taylor says:—

"One remarkable passage of the old man's policy must not be forgotten or omitted, which is thus: His three leases of sixty-three years being expired, he took his last lease of his landlord one Master John Porter for life, with which lease he hath lived more than fifty

years . . . but this old man would for his wife's sake, renew his lease for years, which his landlord would not consent unto; wherefore old Parr, having been long blind, sitting in his chair by the fire, his wife looked out of window, and perceived Master Edward Porter, the son of his landlord, to come towards their house, which she told her husband, saying: 'Husband, our young landlord is coming hither.' 'Is he so?' said old Parr. 'I pr'ythee wife, lay a pin on the ground near my foot, or at my right toe,' which she did; and when young Master Porter, yet forty years old, was come into the house, after salutations between them the old man said: 'Wife, is not that a pin which lies at my foot?' 'Truly, husband,' quoth she, 'it is a pin indeed'; so she took up the pin, and Master Porter was half in a maze that the old man had recovered his sight again; but it was quickly found to be a witty conceit, thereby to have them to suppose him to be more lively than he was, because he hoped to have his lease renewed for his wife's sake, as afore-said . . . He hath had two children by his first wife, a son and a daughter; the boy's name was John, and lived but ten weeks; the girl was named Joan, and she lived but three weeks. So that it appears he hath outlived the most part of the people that are living near there three times over."

In the metrical life which follows we have minute particulars of Parr's life, though the author does not tell us from whom he obtained them. Setting out with his birth in 1483, he makes him in 1500 at the age of seventeen go into service for eighteen years. In 1518, being thirty-five, he inherited a four years' lease of his father's farm. In 1523, being then forty, he got a new lease from

r. Lewis Porter. In 1543 (at 60) obtained another lease from Mr. John Porter, son of Lewis. In 1563 (at 80) he married one Jane Taylor, by whom he had two children, who died in their infancy. In 1585 (at 102) another lease was obtained of Mr. Hugh Porter, son of John. Three years after (1588), at the age of 105, Parr did his celebrated act of penance in a white sheet in Alberbury church, for being the father of an illegitimate child whose mother was one Katherine Milton. In 1595 (at 112) Parr married his first wife, after a married course of thirty-two years. He remained a widower for ten years, when in 1605 (at 122) he married Anne, daughter of John Floyd, of Wilsell, in Montgomery, widow of Anthony Adda. On November 14, 1635, Parr died, at the alleged age of 152 years, nine months, and a few days over.

There are absolutely no documents or registers of any kind to prove for or against Parr's length of life. For more than two hundred years his age has never been disputed, but, at a very recent date the subject has been exhaustively investigated—with no result whatever.

Taylor gives the centenarian no living descendants at the time of his death, but legend has bestowed upon him several. At Shropshire firesides, especially in and about Shrewsbury, they tell you his son lived to be 113, his grandson to 109, and his great grandson to 124, the last being Robert Parr, who died at Kinver, a small parish near Bridgenorth, in the county of Salop. There should be added his great-granddaughter who died in Skiddy's Almshouses, Cork, October, 1792, aged 103. It should, however, be added, that in Shropshire they tell you this son (whence all the other

centenarians mentioned were descended) was the result of some such performance as ended in Parr's penance.

The after-death examination of Parr's remains was performed by the great Harvey at the king's command. Several of the royal physicians were indeed present. The body was found muscular, the chest hairy, and the hair on the fore-arms still black. The legs were without hair, and smooth. The chest was broad and ample, the heart healthy, the bones not at all brittle, as they usually are in age, but flexible and singularly firm. Neither were the cartilages of the ribs converted into bone, as frequently happens in age. The intestines and stomach were perfectly healthy. "Whence it came," says Harvey, "that by day or night, observing no rules or regular time for eating, he was ready to discuss any kind of eatables that was at hand; his ordinary diet consisting of sub-rancid cheese, and milk in every form, coarse and hard bread, and small drink, generally sour whey. On this sorry fare, but living in his home free from care, did this poor man attain to such length of days. He even ate something about midnight shortly before his death."

Harvey set out all particulars in the Latin report which he wrote, and amongst other particulars recorded certain peculiarities which lead to the conclusion that the act of penance may have been no myth.

Harvey, in his final paragraph says, "All the internal parts appeared so healthy that had nothing happened to interfere with the old man's habits of life, he might perhaps have escaped paying the debt due to nature for some little time longer. . . The chief mischief

was probably a change of air. . . . And then for one hitherto used to live on food unvaried in kind, and very simple in its nature, to be set at a table loaded with variety of viands, and tempted not only to eat more than wont, but to partake of strong drink, it must needs fall out that the functions of all the natural organs would become deranged. . . . No wonder that the soul, little content with such a prison, took its flight."

He adds, "The brain was healthy, very firm and hard to the touch. Hence, shortly before his death, although he had been blind for twenty years, he heard extremely well, understood all that was said to him, answered immediately all questions, and had perfect apprehension of any matter in hand. He was also accustomed to walk about, slightly supported between two persons. His memory, however, was greatly impaired, so that he scarcely recollected anything of what had happened to him when he was a young man, nothing of public incidents, or of the kings or nobles who had made a figure, or of the wars or troubles of his earlier life, or of the manners of society, or of the price of things—in a word, of any of the ordinary incidents which men are wont to retain in their memories. He only recollected the events of the last few years. Nevertheless, he was accustomed, even in his hundreth and thirtieth year, to engage lustily in every kind of agricultural labour, whereby he earned his bread, and he had even then the strength required to thrash the corn."

Mr. W. J. Thoms, quite a cynic with regard to centenarians, and who has carried on Sir George C. Lewis's war against the theory of men living to a hundred, applied to the late Dean Stanley to know

if there was an entry of Parr's burial in the Abbey. There was nothing of the kind to be found, but Mr. Thoms's letter to the Dean caused that careful curator to make enquiries, with the result that one of the last services rendered to his beloved Abbey by the Dean, was to cause the almost effaced inscription over old Parr's grave to be re-cut. It may be seen as follows:—

"Tho: Parr of ^e/_y County of Salop. Borne in A^d. 1483. He lived in reigns of Ten Princes viz. : K. Edw. 4, K. Edw. 5, K. Rich. 3, K. Hen. 7, K. Hen. 8, K. Edw. 6, Q. Ma. Q. Eliz., K. Ja. & K. Charles. Aged 152 yeares. & was Buried Here Novemb. 15, 1635."

In and about Shrewsbury the legends concerning "Old Parr" are innumerable. They run to the general effect that at a very early age Thomas was turned upon the fields and began to gain his living. Nothing peculiar or unusual is known of his ways or habits of life during his boyhood. However, he could not have been a healthy youth, as before manhood he developed two distinct and terrible diseases. One was, to give it the name by which it was known in the seventeenth century, the "Blood Flux," known to modern physicians and sufferers by another name, and which is distinguished by a daily passing of blood from the body by way of the bowels. The second and still more serious disease was scrofula, known in the days of the Stuarts, and perhaps long before, (at least in France) as "King's Evil."

It appears according to Salopian legend, that he suffered from these complaints for many years, and that for these ills Parr had recourse to the advice of a witch. But it would now be more rational to urge that he sought the help of one of those strangely adroit women who ob-

ained a certain knowledge of the value of herbs, and turned it to good account. These women still exist, especially in Devonshire, and yet retain their ancient name of witch. Indeed, they are still feared throughout the west of England, and are yet supposed to have the power of working evil. It is not many years since that some ignorant agriculturists actually pursued an aged woman whom they suspected of witchcraft, and whom they beat nearly to death. Shropshire may be said to be in the west; at all events, its people possessed in the past a belief in witches, and they possess it to this day.

The nature of his maladies totally prohibiting Parr from continuing his work upon the land, it is just possible, if there is any truth in the legend, that he acquired that knowledge of herbs which he may have possessed from the women, simple-gatherers, generally supposed to be witches. For if Parr could not work in the fields he could wander through them—so the legend finds him, as he reaches man's estate, gathering herbs.

Indeed it is remarkable that frequently in the history of centenarians, it will be found that they were associated with herb gathering. It is just possible that the open air life simple-gatherers led may have conduced to their longevity. On the other hand, it is not impossible that a knowledge of herbs has maintained health easily in combination with a temperate and open air life. It is certain that the knowledge of simples still possessed by many very ignorant countrymen and women is startling.

It is said (in Shropshire), that Parr performed experiments upon himself with various herbs until he discovered certain growths, which

cured him of both his maladies. In all probability he acquired his knowledge (if he acquired it at all), from the poor creature who was held to be a witch.

With the acquirement of health he appears to have obtained an amount of exceptional strength, and distinguished himself in the village games. He appears to have gone back upon the land, and to have worked there steadily as an unaided bachelor. In Shropshire, always in Shropshire, they say that he remained unmarried until he was eighty-eight years of age—when his appearance would have warranted his being taken for not more than forty-five. One legend runs that by this wife he had two children.

One hears nothing more of him until he is 102, when he had been for some time a widower. It was as a centenarian of two years' existence that he fell in love with the before mentioned Catherine Milton, who appears to have been dazzled by this phenomenal lover. At all events, they insist upon it in Shropshire that she yielded to his flatteries, and became the mother of a child, whose father she declared Parr to be. For this offence he was sentenced to that penance in the parish church, to which reference has been made. The legend goes on to say that "an" Earl of Arundel, an ancestor evidently of the Earl who became Parr's patron fifty years afterwards, was in the sacred building, and found a vast fund of amusement in looking at the Lothario in a white sheet, and holding a penitent candle.

Legend (in Shropshire) at this point gets rather fogged, for there is an omission between Parr's age at 102 and 152; at the latter age an Earl of Arundel certainly brought him up

to London, but down in Salop they say that after Parr's penance he entered "the earl's service where he spent his time in manly exercises, and none could compete with him in strength or activity." It is said that at the age of 120 he married his second wife, a widow. Whether she lived or was a myth legend says not—but continues to observe, that Parr went on active and able-bodied to the age of 145 when he was able to run races (it is not said against whom), thrash corn, and indeed accomplish any laborious work. He frequently ate by night as well as by day, and always preferred the plainest food.

It is also said in Parr's native parts that while in the service of the earl he was presented to the celebrated, "Old Countess of Desmond,"—who danced with Richard III. when Duke of Gloucester. But here the Parr legend grows extravagant even for Shropshire. Finally, the history tells of his removal to Court in 1635, by the Earl of Arundel of that day.

"At court he fed high," says the legend, "and he drank freely of the best wines"—a great change from his ordinary mode of life. In fact they say in Shropshire that court life "killed old Tom Parr at last."

The question of Parr's age is one of great difficulty. No good evidence either for or against the alleged facts has ever been advanced. The probability, however, is that he was perhaps from 110 to 120, which would place his first marriage at a date which would give him fifty years—a very probable age which in time would be looked upon as one of eighty or so, especially if Parr's hair was white by the time he reached his half-century—a suggestion which may account for much of the exaggeration of the legend lying about this old man's

name. That he was a phenomenal person, that he retained his vigour to an age at which probably no other man ever retained his appearance, is very certain. The interest Harvey took in the case is a guarantee that Parr's career was a very remarkable one. The facts of the life are doubtless exaggerated, but beyond question he was one of the most remarkable of English centenarians.

KATHARINE COUNTESS OF DESMOND,

COMMONLY CALLED "THE OLD COUNTESS
DESMOND."

Aged 140. Died 1604.

Sir Walter Raleigh in his "History of the World" was the first author who made mention of the Old Countess of Desmond; but it is necessary to point out that this book was published twenty-five years (1613) after the author had gained his information. He says:—

"I myself knew the Old Countess of Desmond, of Inchiquin, in Munster, who lived in the year 1589 and many years since; who was married in Edward IV.'s time, and held her jointure from all the Earles of Desmond since then; and that this is true all the noblemen and gentlemen of Munster can witness."

Fynes Moryson in his "Itinerary" (1617) is the next authority. He observes:—

"In our time the Irish Countess of Desmonde lived to the age of about 140 yeeres, being able to go on foote foure or five miles to the market toun, and using weekly so to do in her last yeeres; and not many years before she died she had all her teeth renewed."

Lord Bacon then follows. He mentions the lady in his "History of Life and Death," (1623), and in the "Natural History," (1627). The next author in the order of time to mention the Countess, is Archbishop Usher, "Chronologia Sacra." He is followed by Robert Sydney, Earl of Leicester, who mentions the lady in his MS. "Table Book." Finally, Sir William Temple, in his "Essay of Health and Long Life."

Touching these authorities it would appear that Lord Bacon and Archbishop Usher obtained their information from the work of Fynes Moryson, while the Earl of Leicester obtained his in part from Sir Walter Raleigh, and in part from personal enquiries made of Harriot, the philosopher, who was the contemporary and friend of Raleigh. Sir William Temple obtained his information from the Earl of Leicester. It may therefore be inferred, that Sir Walter Raleigh is wholly responsible for all the fact and fiction as to the long life of the celebrated "Old Countesse of Desmonde."

The whole information to be found in various authorities touching this centenarian was adroitly condensed by Pennant, in his "Tour in Scotland," and which he wrote subsequently to seeing a portrait of the lady at Dupplin Castle—one which he had engraved and published in his book. He says, speaking of the pictures in the place "But the most remarkable is a head of the celebrated Countess of Desmond, whom the apologists for the usurper Richard III., bring in evidence against the received opinion of his deformity. She was the daughter of the Fitz-Geralds, of Drumana, in the county of Waterford, and married in the reign of Edward IV., James fourteenth Earl

of Desmond. She was in England in the same reign, and danced at court with his brother Richard, then Duke of Gloucester. She was then a widow, for Sir Walter Raleigh says she held her jointure from all the Earls of Desmond since that time. She lived to the age of some years above a hundred and forty, and died in the reign of James I. It appears that she retained her full vigour in a very advanced period of life; for the ruin of the house of Desmond reducing her to poverty, obliged her to take a journey from Bristol to London, to solicit relief from the court, at a time she was above a hundred and forty. She also once or twice renewed her teeth, for Lord Bacon assures us in his "History of Life and Death," '*ter per vices dentisse*;' and in his "Natural History," mentions that she did dentire twice or thrice, casting her old teeth, and others coming in their place."

The evidence in favour of cutting teeth at an advanced age is not frequent, but it is not absolutely non-existent. For instance, a reference to Le Nève affords the following quotation, referring to Edward Progers, groom of the chamber to Charles II. He died 1713, at the age of 96, "of the anguish of cutting his teeth, he having cut four new teeth, and had several ready to cut, which so inflamed his gums that he died thereof."

The *Limerick Chronicle* (May 29th, 1858), also yields an instance of a similar phenomenon:—"Mrs. Fussell, residing at Acton, nearly 80 years of age, *who was for many years toothless*, has recently cut an entire row of new teeth; they caused her a great deal of suffering."

There is a portrait at Muckross, Killarney, of the date 1604.

It is inscribed thus :—

"Catherine Countesse of Desmonde,
As she appeared at y^e Court of our
Souraigne Lord King James, in thys

Present yeaere, A.D. 1604,

And in the 140th yeaere of her age.
Whither she came from Bristol to
seek

Reliefe, y^e House of Desmonde,
having

Been ruined by Attainder. She was
Married in y^e Reigne of King
Edward IV., and in y^e course of her
Long Pilgrimage renewed her
Teeth twice.

Her principal Residence is
Inchiquin, in Munster, whither she
Undauntedlye proposeth
(her Purpose Accomplished)
Incontinentlie to return.

LAUS DEO."

Modern inquiry has of course swept away many of the wonderful legends, facts, and statements grouped about the life of the Countess, but it remains quite clear and evident, that she was a centenarian, and that her bodily vigour and mental condition, when over a hundred, were of a fairly perfect character.

Sir Walter Raleigh, writing at the time of her death, affirmed that the Countess was married in the time of Edward IV., and "held her joynture from all the Earles of Desmond since then." Dr. Smith (1750), in his "History of the County and City of Cork," quite proved Raleigh to be wrong by undoubted documentary evidence. It appears, however, clear that she must have married her particular Earl of Desmond so early as 1529. She was his second wife, he at the time being an aged man. It has, therefore, been adroitly supposed that her alleged memories of the Courts of Edward IV. and of Richard III.,

when still Duke of Gloucester, were not her own recollections, but memories of what her husband may have told her of these Courts, and which she, scores and scores of years afterwards, related as her own reminiscences. The husband was Thomas, *thirteenth* Earl of Desmond, who married Kattelyn Fitz-John, who became his countess in the first year of his succession to the family title.

It appears that Pennant and Sir William Temple, and the Earl of Leicester were all wrong in the story about the countess, in extreme age, taking a journey from Ireland, by way of Bristol, to the English Court. A Countess of Desmond certainly *did* make this journey—but she was Elenor, the widow of the rebel Earl, who went to Queen Elizabeth in 1587, and obtained from that long, if hot, headed queen, a pension of £200. These modern corrections are fully borne out by reference to certain documents in the State Paper Office, which may be found printed at length in an essay by Mr. Sainthill, which has thrown the most modern light upon the exaggerations associated with the "Old Countess's" life.

According to Mr. Sainthill, her first husband, the "Bald Old Earl," Thomas, Earl of Desmond, was fifty years her senior when he ventured to marry the lady, (by whom he had one daughter, Katherine, afterwards wife of Sir Philip Barry Ogee) late in the reign of Henry VIII. She was named after Katherine of Aragon. Legend has placed this birth in the days of Edward IV., instead of the far later ones of Henry VIII., and hence, dating from this error, the old countess's age was declared to be over 140 when at last she gave up the ghost.

Modern research, of a physiological character, has also rejected the

theory that "the old countess" had three sets of teeth. It is held to be impossible — because the human teeth are not "bred" (as Bacon and other eminent writers observe), but both the first and second sets are born with us, in little bags or nests, from which they grow into maturity. It is therefore urged that whatever instances there may be in the stories of the Countess of Desmond or other long-lived persons, of teeth being renewed in old age, can only apply to the cutting of a few teeth of the second set that *accidentally* had been undeveloped at an earlier period of the life, and not to any third set.

It is said, as a legend, that her death was caused by her fall from a fruit tree, either a cherry or nut, more probably the former, into which she had climbed for the sake of the fruit. Indeed, there is a couplet known still to most old village women-gossips which says of the old countess:—

"She lived to the age of a hundred and ten,
And died of a fall from a cherry tree then."

As to the date of the death of the countess, there is no dispute ("Genealogical Collections of Sir George Carew, Earl of Totnes"—*Lambeth Library*) that she died in anno 1604. It being then granted that she died in 1604, and her first marriage being dated so late as 1529; also admitting her to be then quite a woman, she is demonstrated, under the least favourable conditions, to have been almost a centenarian.

There are several portraits of this lady in existence—a sure proof of her importance, for she lived (especially during her early days) in a time when portrait-painting in England was rare. The most authentic appears to be the one already mentioned, belonging to Mr. Herbert of Mucross Abbey (Kil-larney), which a competent art

critic has pronounced to be aristocratic, patrician, and placid, though deeply traced with sorrow. There are also portraits at Dupplin Castle (already referred to) and Windsor Castle. These, Walpole contends are identical, or rather, one the copy of the other. But modern investigators have found differences. There is another at Chatsworth, which seems to be a replica of the one at Dupplin. Several others in various parts of the country are also claimed by their owners to be portraits of this remarkable woman.

In conclusion it may be assumed, judging from all the information now in existence, that it was her seventy years' widowhood which led to the legends as to her great age. Married young to the thirteenth Earl of Desmond, whose second wife she was, she outlived Earl after Earl of Desmond, so that gradually her position in relation to that peerage became singularly patriarchal. Her last and most critical commentator ("Dublin Review," 1862) thus finally disposes of her claims to great age:—"After having ascertained that she was a bride and a mother (for she gave birth to a daughter, Katherine, afterwards wife of Philip Barry Ogee) late in the reign of Henry VIII. instead of that of Edward IV., we must certainly deduct largely from her reputed years. It is more likely that they were a hundred and four than a hundred and forty."

A hundred and four were enough in all conscience, but it may be doubted if the last word has been written about the old Countess of Desmond, for nothing has been ascertained as to her age in 1529, when she married the earl. Suppose her then to have been forty, the probabilities are against an old man of seventy marrying a woman of that age, the tendency of that sort

of bridegroom being towards youth, but the suggestion is not absolutely and theoretically demonstrable as impossible, then in the last year of Edward IV. (1483) she would not have been born, for this calculation would make her birth in 1489.

In the year 1862, the Marquess of Kildare, *Notes and Queries*. June 14, dashed into the controversy, and before half the year was gone demonstrated that Gyles ny Cormyk, wife to Sir Thomas of Desmond, was married to that worthy, not in the 20th Henry VIII., but 20th Henry VII. This made a difference of twenty-four years in the old Countess's marriage. The Marquess evidently desirous of proving the Countess's great age, contended that she was nearly Sir Thomas's age when she married him. In 1505 (20 Hen. VII.) Sir Thomas, afterwards Earl of Desmond, was fifty-one. What was then her age? The date of her daughter's birth is not known. It may have been ten, fifteen, or twenty years after her marriage; let us say fifteen, and that she was then, say, forty-five, this would make her thirty when she married in 1505, and as she died in 1604, the result would give her as 129 at the time of her death. If, on the other hand, it is assumed her child was born when she was fifty, she having married at forty, as one legend insists, then her shade can claim 139 or 140 years of existence.

In *The Times*, (May 24, 1872) will be found a very curious letter from "A resident in the county of Waterford," wherein it is stated that it was in the writer's power to confirm the statement that the old Countess of Desmond reached the ripe age of 140 years; for a landlord in the County of Waterford had in his possession a legal document of the time of James I., wherein it was set forth that certain lands

would fall in on the death of the Countess of Desmond, then aged sevenscore years.

The best recent information about this centenarian is to be found in the *Dublin Review*, for March, 1862. Here the whole history of the venerable lady in question, and the controversies about her identity, her longevity, and her portraiture, are passed under consideration, the principal writers reviewed, being:—1. The Hon. Horace Walpole, in his *Inquiry* into the subject; 2. Mr. Sainthill, in his "Olla Podrida," 1841; 3. Mr. Herbert F. Hore, in the *Quarterly Review*, 1853; 4. Sir Bernard Burke, in "Vicissitudes of Families," 1860; 5. Archdeacon Rowan in the "Olde Countesse of Desmonde; her Identitie; her Portraiture; her Descente," 1860; and 6. Mr. Sainthill in the "Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, 1861."

LUIGI CORNARO.

Aged 100. Died 1566.

All account of the life of this remarkable man (what he himself has said apart), is obtained from a short memoir written by his granddaughter, a nun of Padua. Her life of her grandfather was to the following effect.

Cornaro was by the ill-conduct of some of his relations deprived of the dignity of a noble Venetian (nothing is said as to the nature of the accusation). He was not absolutely banished from Venice, where he was free to remain if he thought fit. He, however, turned from that city and settled at Padua. He married when old, but for many long years his wife had no children; finally a daughter was born who was named Clara. The father was then quite an ancient

gentleman. But he lived to see his daughter bring into the world seven children—for though he was very ancient when Clara came into the world, yet he lived to see her very old, and his offspring to the third generation.

Cornaro was a man of parts, of merit, and of courage. He was evidently vain, and a freely hospitable man. "His youth," says his granddaughter "was infirm, he being very passionate and hasty. But when he perceived what damage the vices of his temper caused him, he resolved to correct them, and had strength enough over himself to conquer his passion and those extravagant humours to which he was subject."

Farther on the Nun of Padua says: "As an ageing man he was extraordinarily sober and observed the rules which he mentions in his writings. He dieted himself always with so much wisdom and precaution that finding his natural heat decaying by degrees in his old age, he also diminished his diet by degrees so far as to stint himself to the yolk of an egg for a meal; and sometimes a little before his death, it served him for two meals. By this means he preserved his health and was also vigorous to the age of one hundred years. His mind did not decay—he never had need of spectacles, neither lost he his hearing; and that which is not less true than difficult to believe, is that he preserved his voice so clear and harmonious that at the end of his life he sang with as much strength and delight as he did at the age of twenty-five years.

"He had foreseen that he should live long without any infirmity and was not deceived in it. When he felt that his last hour drew near, he disposed himself to leave this world with the piety of a Christian and

the courage of a philosopher. He made his will and set all his affairs in order, after which he received the last sacrament, and expected death patiently in an elbow chair."

"In short," says his granddaughter, "it may be said that being in good health, feeling no manner of pain, having also his eye and mind very brisk, a little fainting fit took him, which was instead of an agony, and made him fetch his last breath." He died at Padua, the 26th of April, 1566, and was buried the 8th May following.

His wife, very many years his junior, outlived him some years.

Cornaro himself in his work "The Sure Way of Attaining a Long and Healthful Life," written when between eighty and ninety, gives some very interesting information as to the attainment of five score years. He wrote the book when he was fast approaching a century of life. He seems to consider high feeding and short life interchangeable terms.

"How many" he cries, "have I seen cut off in the flower of their days by the unhappy custom of high feeding? . . . The number and variety of dishes is a fatal abuse . . . Nothing can be more beneficial to man than to observe a regimen that it is practicable and very necessary to follow.

"I say then that the weakness of my constitution, which was considerably increased by my way of living, cast me into so deplorable a condition that I was forced to bid a final adieu to all feasting, to which I have had all my life long a violent inclination. I was so often engaged in excesses of this kind that my delicate constitution could not hold up under the fatigues of them. I fell into several distempers, such as pains of the stomach, the cholic and the gout. I had a lin-

gering fever and an intolerable thirst hanging upon me. This made me despair of any cure, and though I was not then above thirty-five or forty years old, yet I had no hope of finding any other end of my distemper, but what should end my life too."

Thus we find by his own words that Cornaro lived to be forty before he discovered that high living and debauchery were too much for him. It is therefore quite evident that he must have been born with a very large amount of vitality.

The doctors telling him that only regimen would save his life, and he knowing several persons of great age and bad constitutions who only prolonged their lives by observing a regimen, he began to think of imitating so good an example.

That he was as worldly and foolish as the worst of Venetians and other Italian young men of fortune of his day is shown in his own words:—

"I had made a jest of the doctors. When I was cloyed with the diet they ordered me I did eat of all those meats which they had forbidden; and perceiving myself hot and dry, I drank wine in abundance."

"In a little time," he writes, "as soon as I resolved to believe my physicians, and thought that it was not a disgrace to have courage enough to be wise, I accustomed myself so much to live soberly that I contracted a habit of so doing without any trouble or violence offered to myself. In a little time I found relief, and at the year's end I found myself not only on the mending hand, but I was perfectly cured of all my distempers."

His method of dieting himself, when still on the younger side of fifty was rational: "I made choice of

such wines and meats as agreed with my constitution. I proportioned the quantity thereof according to the strength of my stomach. I declined all diet that did not agree with me, and made it a law to restrain my appetite, so that I always rose from the table with a stomach to eat more if I pleased. In a word, I entirely renounced intemperance, and made a vow to continue the remainder of my life under the same regimen. . . . I had never before lived a year without falling at least once into some violent distemper. But this never happened to me afterwards. On the contrary, I have been always healthful, ever since I have been temperate."

Here we find that moderation rather than exclusion in feeding produced the desired effect. Cornaro also tells us that he avoided extremes of heat and cold, all late hours, and the sex; that he rarely walked in the sun, and avoided melancholy.

At seventy Cornaro had an experience which is of great value in its bearing upon the conditions under which, in age, injuries can be borne. The carriage in which he was driving was run away with, overturned, and dragged some distance before the horses were stopped. He was taken out of the carriage with his skull fractured, a dislocated shoulder, and a dislocation of one of the legs: "In a word," he says, "I was in a very lamentable condition. As soon as they brought me home again they sent for the physicians, who did not expect I could live three days to an end. However, they resolved upon letting me bleed, to prevent the coming of a fever. I was so confident that the regular life which I had led had prevented the contracting of any ill humours that I opposed the bleeding. I ordered them to

press my head, to set my leg and arm, to rub me with some specific oil's proper for bruises, and without any other remedies I was soon cured, to the great astonishment of the physicians, and of all those who knew me."

When he was almost eighty years of age he nearly lost his life, in consequence of giving way to the persuasions of those about him. He says:—

"In vain I urged upon them the proverb, 'He that eats little, eats much,' that is to say, if a man is willing to live long in the enjoyment of his food, let him live sparingly. I also told them that what one leaves at a meal does more good than what one has already eaten. But all this could not prevail upon them, and being wearied with their importunities I was forced to submit. Having, therefore, before been used to take twelve ounces (per day) in bread, soups, yolks of eggs, and meat, I increased it to fourteen ounces a day; and drinking about fourteen ounces of wine, I added two more, and made it sixteen.

[This would be about a pint of wine a day—but Cornaro does not say of what kind. However, as a rule, the Italian wines are very heady.]

The result of this increase of food appears to have been serious: "I began to be sad," he says, "and out of humour; everything offended me, and upon the least occasion I broke out into a passion, so that a dog (as they say) would not live with me. At twelve days' end, I was taken with a violent fit of the cholick, and that followed by a continual fever, which tormented me five-and-thirty days together, and for the first fifteen days put me in such an agony, that it was impossible for me to take a quarter-of-an hour's sleep at a time . . .

However, I recovered . . . Nothing freed me from this danger but the regimen which I had so long observed."

Farther on he observes: "They will tell you" [those about him] "that I am still so strong at fourscore and three" [his illness had occurred when he was seventy-eight] "as to mount a horse without any help; that I can not only ascend a flight of stairs without any concern, but likewise a hill, all on foot; that I am always merry, always pleased, always in humour — maintaining a happy peace in my own mind, the sweetness and serenity whereof appear at all times in my countenance. Besides, they know that 'tis in my power to pass away the time very pleasantly, having nothing to hinder me from tasting all the pleasures of an agreeable society with several persons of parts and worth. When I am willing to be alone, I read good books, and sometimes fall to writing, seeking always an occasion of being useful to the public, and doing service to private persons, as far as possible. I do all this without the least trouble, and in such times as I set apart for these employments."

But it must not be forgotten that Cornaro was a man of fortune, and that life in no way pressed upon him pecuniarily. He writes:—"I dwell in a house which, besides its being situated in the pleasantest part of Padua, may be looked upon as the most convenient and most agreeable mansion in that city. I there make me apartments proper for the winter and the summer, which serve me as a shelter to defend me from the rigid coldness of the one, and the extreme heat of the other. I walk out in my gardens, along my canals and walks, where I always meet with some

little thing or other to do, which at the same time employs and diverts me. I spend the months of April, May, September, and October at my country house, which is the finest situation imaginable."

As he nears the end of his book Cornaro is still more delightful: "To conclude, as an addition to my happiness, I see myself as it were immortalised and born again by the great number of my descendants. I meet with not only two or three when I come home, but eleven grandchildren, the eldest of whom is eighteen, and the youngest two years old, all healthful, of good parts and of promising hopes. I take a delight in playing with the youngsters; children between three and five years of age being generally very merry and diverting company. Those who are older entertain me better. I often make them sing and play upon musical instruments, and sometimes I join in concert with them. Call you this an infirm and crazy old age, as they pretend who say that a man is but half alive after he is seventy? They may believe as they please but in reality I would not change my age and life for the most flourishing youth, which lays no restraint upon its senses, being sure that it is subject to a great many distempers which may occasion death."

No more charming invitation to age has been written than this paragraph. It is a complete consolation. Cornaro's final words are equally delightful:—

"I will conclude with saying that since extreme old age may be so useful and pleasant to men, I should have failed in point of charity had I not taken care to inform them by what methods they might prolong their days. I have no other motive in writing upon this subject

than that of engaging them to practise all their lives a virtue which would bring them, like me, to a happy old age, in which I will not cease to cry 'Live, live long—to the end you may serve God, and be fit for the glory which he prepares for his elect.'"

Man never imagined a more beautiful ideal of life in age than this. Reading these words we can well understand how fifteen or more years after he had laid down his pen as an author, Cornaro glided from life rather than died, leaving behind him the most delightful dissertation that has ever been written upon old age—not even excepting Cicero's work. It has been said that Cornaro borrowed his work from this great writer. No greater mistake was ever made. It is not even an imitation of the "De senectute." It is a sheer Christian life experience—honest, frank, keen and careful. Cornaro was the very king of centenarians.

Dr. Abernethy, in his work "On the Digestive Organs, &c." makes the following observations:—"It would be well if the public would follow the advice of Addison, given in the *Spectator* (No. 195), on reading the writings of Lewis Cornaro, who having naturally a weak constitution, which he seemed to have ruined by intemperance, so that he was expected to die at the age of thirty-five, but at that period adopted a strict regimen, allowing himself only twelve ounces of food daily. By this plan of diet he lived to more than 100 years; and it is delightful to observe the tranquil cheerfulness and energetic state of mind accompanying his bodily health, and in a great measure induced by it." Most evident is it by these remarks that Abernethy, a man of great acumen and possessed of a known aversion

to exaggeration, quite believed in the centenarianism of Luigi Cornaro.

THOMAS CAM.

Alleged Age 107. Died 1588.

Mr. C. Walford "Guide to Insurance," asserts his belief in the longevity of all the persons of his list of 120, whom he alleges to have lived to 120 years and upwards, but he does doubt if the truth is told about Cam, when he sets his age down at 207—*two hundred and seven*.

Cam was a Londoner, and lived and died in the parish of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. He expired January 28th, 1588, aged 107. A very strange thing occurred in relation to the entry of this centenarian's death in the register of St. Leonard's (Shoreditch). Suddenly the entry sprang from 107 to 207. Early in 1852 the discovery of this amazing change caused a great deal of discussion, which was set at rest by a letter from Mr. Henry Edwards, the then clerk to the Trustees of St. Leonard's, in which he says:—

"Some few years ago I examined the register-book in which the entry is made. No one can mistake the figures 107; there was not then any appearance of an alteration." Sir Henry Ellis, who published a "History of Shoreditch," gives the age 107. Nothing beyond the register of this good soul's death is known of Thomas Cam.

GEORGE CURZON.

Aged 104. Died 1652.

In the register of Kedleston, Derbyshire, may be found "George Curzon, being an hundred and four years old, was buried March 25,

1652." It is true the register in question does not possess a date early enough to be that of his baptism. But it is not probable that there could have been a mistake in the age of a member of so important a family as that of the Curzons.

JANE SCRIMSHAW.

Aged 101. Died 1711.

In Cauldfield's "Portraits, Characters and Memoirs of Remarkable Persons," there is a portrait of this centenarian, who was never married. When little more than thirty years old, being an invalid, which she remained for nearly seventy years, she found a comfortable asylum in Merchant Taylors' almshouses, near Little Tower Hill. Her portrait which was taken in April, 1711, at the Almshouses bears an inscription describing her as then in a "good state of health—that is to say—in no danger of dying." It is difficult to comprehend that this Merchant Taylors' almswoman, after being fostered for nearly seventy years, was turned out and removed to Rosemary Lane Workhouse, where she promptly died before the year was out. She was said to have died from a broken heart. There can be little doubt that forcibly moving a centenarian from a home where he or she has lived for seventy years is not a performance calculated to extend to any great extent that centenarian's life.

FRANCIS HAFAZOLI.

Aged 115. Died 1702.

Francis Hafazoli, was born in Sardinia in 1587, and died in 1702.

RICHARD GRIFFITH.*Alleged Age 116. Died 1736.*

The *London Daily Post* for May 14, 1736, gives an instance of a London centenarian, one Richard Griffith, who died (amongst all the then unwholesome places in the metropolis), in horrible Kent Street, Southwark, which has been cleared only within the last twenty years, up to which time it remained a spot where typhus fever never ceased to exist. Richard was alleged to have died at 116, and was reckoned to have been the oldest man in England. There are no particulars given of his life.

WILLIAM WRIGHT.*Aged 106. Died 1736.*

Within four days of recording the death of Richard Griffith, the *London Daily Post* recorded the death of another centenarian, one William Wright, at Stirling, Scotland, who had recently died aged 106. He had followed the far from healthy trade of a weaver, and had thrown the shuttle within a year of his death.

MARGARET FINCH.*Aged 109. Died 1740.*

There is a railway station near the Crystal Palace called Gipsy Hill. It is all that remains of a celebrated, even historical gipsy encampment, of whom Margaret was one for more than a hundred years.

Early in the present century (1815) the gipsies here were arrested, fined, and otherwise maltreated. They were then about 60 or 70. They never recovered the attack, but they did not wholly

abandon their stronghold, and so late as 1836-40 descendants were to be found at Beulah Spa Gardens—a Spa which existed until quite recently at the side of a public road. At this place professed descendants of Margaret through many years consulted the stars for customers at so much per head.

Margaret Finch, the Norwood centenarian gipsy has her death recorded in the register of Beckenham as having occurred on October 24, 1740, at 109 years. Like most of her people she had wandered from head-quarters all over the land, but she was true to the first line of Surrey hills. As she neared a century of years she began to find travelling a little wearisome, and she settled at Norwood, where at once she took up high ground in relation to her tribe.

Not being royal Romany blood, and therefore no queen of the gipsies, nevertheless her popularity, and her ever-increasing prosperity, gave her a high position among the "Egyptians." As years progressed her limbs became set, and finding her most comfortable position that of being quite squatted on the ground, with the knees drawn up to the chin, she adopted this posture day and night, until the bones were as fixed as those of an Indian fakir. She never walked, and barely moved for the last twelve years of her life, she sleeping even in this position—in which she died.

She ate very little, drank very little, chiefly spirits and water, and she was an inveterate smoker of a long strong pipe. In 1739, a year before her death, a portrait (after her death engraved) was made of Margaret. It presents her like a dumpy sack, with a head growing out of its top. She is swaddled in cloak and hood, one bare arm showing scarcely more than a bone, with

huge bony hand resting on the ground. The face is long, narrow, the nose aquiline, the mouth pleasant, indeed the face is altogether not unpleasing. She is smoking her favorite long pipe, her jug is closely close to her left hand, and her faithful cur, her last earthly affectionate friend, is leaping up to lick her shrivelled cheeks.

When dead it was found quite impossible to straighten out the body, and she was therefore buried in a deep square box. So popular had she become as a fortuneteller, so widespread was a belief in her prophecies, that her death caused a stir even as far as London, whence people went in great swarms along the country roads to see her buried. An immense concourse saw her remains placed in the ground. Two mourning coaches conveyed the more important of the gipsy tribe of Norwood—a tribe then in a very flourishing condition, for Margaret had brought them increasing good fortune as her years went on. A special sermon was preached on the occasion. Even in these days in quiet neighbouring villages (like ancient Dulwich for instance), the old folk still talk, as a legend, of the wonderful Norwood Teller of Fortunes—Margaret Finch.

LORD LYTTTELTON'S CENTENARIAN.

Aged 105. Died about 1746.

In April, 1862, Lord Lyttelton made public a letter by an ancestor of his. It was written in the last century by George, Lord Lyttelton. "Letter to Mr. Bower, with an account of a tour in Wales," (dated 6th July, 1756). It may be found in Lyttelton's "Miscellaneous Works," by Ayscough, (2nd ed., London, 1775, in 4to. p. 718). It runs as follows :—

"Not long ago there died in that neighbourhood (Festiniog) an honest Welsh farmer who was 105 years of age. By his first wife he had thirty children, ten by his second, four by his third, and seven by two other women. His youngest son was eighty-one years younger than his eldest; and eight hundred persons, descended from his body, attended his funeral."

REV. GEO. BRAITHWAITE.

Aged 110. Died 1753.

"December 16, 1753, at 11 in the morning, died the Rev. Geo. Braithwaite, of St. Mary's, Carlisle, curate, aged 110 or 111 years, being Sunday." He retained his memory to the last, and was between 90 and 100 years in Carlisle Cathedral. He had become quite blind before he died. But this affliction in no way interfered with his sacred office, for he could repeat all the services and psalms by heart, except the lessons; could marry, church, christen, &c. He was led about in his few declining years by his grandson George Dalton. He always shed tears or rather tears were always seen in his eyes when the psalm was read containing the words: "O that I had wings like a dove, then would I flee away and be at rest." His death was singularly calm and beautiful. In reference to this case a writer of some eminence has said :—

"Modern newspapers contain from time to time notices of the deaths of persons who are alleged to have outlived *this* age. It may be conjectured that these statements of longevity are in general made on the authority of the individuals' own memory. Now there are many reasons why old persons should be mistaken about their age if their memory is not corrected

by written documents. Even with people in easy circumstances great age is a subject of curiosity, wonder and solicitude; with persons in a humbler rank of life it is a ground of sympathy, interest and charity. It is therefore not unnatural that a person whose real age exceeds ninety years, and who has no contemporaries to check his statements, should, without intending to commit any deliberate deceit, represent his age as greater than the reality. But in the case of the Rev. Geo. Braithwaite there can be no question of the assertion that he died at the age of 110. The cathedral records prove that he was associated with that establishment through 97 years—assuredly the longest continuous service ever accomplished by a mortal man."

YORKSHIRE CENTENARIANS.

Died chiefly between 1750-1790.

Yorkshire has always produced more centenarians, proportion of size and numbers borne in mind, than any other county in England, Scotland or Wales. Ireland, however, beats Yorkshire in centenarianism. There are not, however, many Irish cases quoted in this book—the mass of Irish examples having been rejected from sheer want of proof. In the following examples, collected with great labour by a Mr. Smeeton, early in the century, the greater number of cases are based upon the particulars of tombstones, verified by reference to registers, while in many Mr. Smeeton gathered particulars from old men and women who remembered this or that centenarian.

ALICE ATKINS, York; *aged 109; died 1749.*

JANE ATKINS, York; *aged 100; died 1761.*

JANE BLAKE, North Leeds; *aged 114; died 1763.*

MARGARET BARTLEMER, Leeds; *aged 102; died 1765.*

ROBERT BUTTERFIELD, Halifax; *aged 102.* He was through forty years a wool-stapler, and acquired a fortune of £40,000; *died 1781.*

S. BRIGG, Gent., of Hooper Hall, near Craven; *aged 100; died 1782.*

WILLIAM BIRKHEAD, Gent., of Broock House, near Clackheaton; *aged 100; died 1797.*

FRANCIS CONSID, Gent., of Burythorpe, near Malton; *aged 150; died 1768.* He was very temperate in his living and used great exercise, which together, "with his occasionally eating a raw new-laid egg enabled him to obtain so extraordinary an age."

RALPH COULSON, of Grimstone; *aged 107; died 1771.*

MARGARET CHAMPNEY, of Carlton; *aged 102; died 1782.*

MARY COUSEN, of Wakefield; *aged 106; died 1790.*

PETER DELME, Gent., Leeds; *aged 104; died 1773.*

Mrs. DAWSON, Wakefield; *aged 101; died 1798.*

Mr. JOHN DEMAINE, West-End, Fewstone; *aged 110; died 1820.*

Mrs. ANN DAWSON, Collin's Cottage, Harrogate; *aged 101; died 1818.*

Mr. FRANK, Portefract; *aged 109; died 1782.*

MARY GUMMERSELL, near Wakefield; *aged 107.* She was mother of 14 children; grandmother to 33; great-grandmother to 84, and great-great-grandmother to 25—in all 156 descendants; *died 1763.*

THOMAS GARBUT, Hurworth ; *aged* 101 ; *died* 1773.

WILLIAM GIBSON, farmer, Hutton Bush ; *aged* 102 ; *died* 1796.

ANN HATFIELD, JAMES HATFIELD ; Tinsley ; *aged* 105.

This couple were wife and husband, she here taking precedence because she preceded him to the tomb. In and about Tinsley the legend runs that she prematurely died, or rather committed suicide inadvertently, through an injudicious debauch of plain suet dumpling. The widower could not survive the loss, and died incontinently, and continent. In Tinsley they say to this day, "Eh, boot there's nou knowing 'ow long t' old lad had t' lived had Jim nou died o' a breeken 'art."

Jem Hatfield had been formerly a soldier, like so many centenarians. Probably discipline is a good preparation for great length of life. It is of him the anecdote is told (at all events in Tinsley, Yorks.) of St. Paul's bell striking thirteen instead of twelve. The legend runs (at Tinsley) that he was on duty as a sentinel at Windsor one night, on guard until midnight. As his guard expired he counted St. Paul's bell strike twelve. There must have been a good breeze from the direct east to carry the sound of Paul's bell to Windsor, and Windsor must have been very quiet for the time being. To Jim's intense astonishment St. Paul's struck thirteen. However his eyes were not so completely opened that he was no longer sleepy, and as the relief guard did not arrive promptly, why Jim "went off," and was found by the relief guard when it did arrive, fast asleep.

Necessarily a court-martial followed, at which Jim, who was not

to be shot at twenty, seeing that he was to live to 105, pleaded that he was on duty his legal time, and only fell asleep after midnight, and when therefore his time was up. As proof of what he asserted, he averred that he had heard St. Paul's bell strike one more than twelve—that is to say, thirteen strokes.

The court appears to have considered this argument good, for enquiries were made, the truth of what Jim declared proved, and he was triumphantly acquitted, though no enquiry appears to have been made as to how St. Paul's bell contrived to be so phenomenal, as to how Jim came to hear it, and as to whether anybody else did. Finally, it is clear that the troublesome question, "Should or should not a sentry be punished if he fall asleep after his time on guard is up, even if he is not relieved for—say a century?" was altogether evaded.

Of his story it may well be said, "*Se non è vero è ben trovato.*" It is to be feared it was invented for Jim and his wife after she had so unsentimentally overeaten herself with dumpling at the early age of 105, while Jim himself in consequence of his wife's hurried departure had so sentimentally died (let it be supposed of a broken heart), at the same trying age. Anyhow, in Tinsley, to this day they believe in all these things devotedly.

MARY HALL, Bishop's Hill, of which place, where she lived all her life, she was sexton. *Aged* 105 ; *died* 1759.

ELIZABETH HODGSON, Scampston ; *aged* 110 ; *died* 1759.

WILLIAM HUGHES, Tadcaster ; *aged* 127 ; *died* 1769.

WILLIAM HARDWICK, Leeds ; *aged* 100 ; *died* 1772.

JOHN HOUSEMAN, Sessays, near Trisk; *aged 111; died 1777.*

JONATHAN HARTOP, Aldborough, near Boroughbridge; *aged 138, died 1791.* His father and mother died of the plague in the Minories, in 1666, and he perfectly well remembered the great fire of London. He was short in stature; had been married five times, and left 7 children, 26 grandchildren, 74 great-grandchildren, and 140 great-great-grandchildren. He could read to the last without spectacles, and play at cribbage with the most perfect recollection. On Christmas Day, 1789, he walked nine miles to dine with one of his great-grandchildren. He remembered Charles II., and once travelled from London to York with the facetious Killegrew. He ate but little, and his only beverage was milk. He enjoyed an uninterrupted flow of spirits. The third wife of this extraordinary man was an illegitimate daughter of Oliver Cromwell, who gave with her a portion amounting to about £500. He possessed a fine portrait of Cromwell, by Cooper, for which a Mr. Hollis offered £300, but was refused. Mr. Hartop lent the great Milton £50 soon after the Restoration, which the bard returned him with honour, though not without much difficulty, as his circumstances were very low. Mr. Hartop would have declined receiving it, but the pride of the poet was equal to his genius, and he sent the money with an angry letter, which was found among the curious possessions of this venerable old man.

MARY HALMSHAW, of Wakefield; *aged 102.* She had been a widow upwards of fifty years and her faculties were unimpaired to the

last. Such was her health and activity, that, when in her 97th year, she walked from Wakefield to London, a distance of 184 miles, and returned again on foot.

ELIAS HOYLE, of Sowerbury; *aged 113.*

ANN JOHNSON of Aldborough; *aged 102; died 1766.*

JUAN JONES of Gisborough; *aged 103; died 1772.*

SAMUEL JOHNSONE, of Bridlington; *aged 104; died 1779.*

MARY JACKSON, of Cropton; *aged 104; died 1789.*

GEORGE KIRTON, Esq., of Oxnop Hall; *aged 125; died 1769.* He was a most remarkable foxhunter, following the chase on horseback till he was 80 years of age; from that period to 100 years he regularly attended the unkennelling of the fox in his single chair. This is a case that even Mr. Thoms dare not question, for the squire was born and died at Oxnop Hall. He is an historical centenarian.

MARY KERSHAW, of Pontefract; *aged 103; died 1778.*

ANN KEIGHLY, of Hanslett, near Leeds; *aged 100; died 1796.*

Mrs. KING, of Dent; *aged 111; died 1820.*

ROBERT LAURENCE, of Gisborough; *aged 100; died 1761.*

DANIEL LEGRO, Esq., of Leeds; *aged 103; died 1771.*

THOMAS LOVEDAY, of Scroby; *aged 101; died 1789.*

RICHARD MATHERMAN, of Ripley; *aged 102; died 1766.*

Mrs. MOORE, of Rigby; *aged 107; died 1768.*

Mrs. MAWHOOD, of Pontefract; *aged 100; died 1792.*

rs. OGDEN, of Holbeck, near Leeds; *aged 106; died 1795.*

ROBERT OGLEBIE, of Rippon; *aged 115; died 1762.* A travelling tinker; he was married 73 years, and had 12 sons and 13 daughters, had all his senses perfect, and could see to work a short time previous to his death.

Mrs. PILKINGTON, of Bicester; *aged 107; died 1757.*

JOHN PHILLIPS, of Thorn, near Leeds; *aged 117; died 1742.* He lived under eight crowned heads, and was able to walk till within a few days of his death. His teeth were good, and his sight and hearing tolerable. At about the age of 28, being constable of his parish, he, upon some disorders, committed two of Oliver Cromwell's soldiers to the town stocks; the Protector, far from resenting it, wished that every one of his officers had but half his courage.

AMUEL PAUDAMES, of Yeddington; *aged 105; died 1792.*

MARTHA PRESTON, of Barnsley; *aged 125; died 1769.*

ELEANOR RAILSTON, of Jarrow Quay; *aged 102; died 1785.*

BARTHOLOMEW RYMER, of Rippon; *aged 100; died 1791.* He was a man of good health and activity. He was game-keeper to Sir Bellingham Graham, Bart., of Norton Conyers, and shot game flying in his 99th year.

JOHN SHEPHERD, of Tadcaster; *aged 109; died 1757.*

JAMES SIMPSON, near Knaresborough; *aged 112; died 1766.*

JOSHUA SIMPSON, Esq., of Hanslett, near Leeds; *aged 104; died 1780.*

MARGARET SCURRAL, of Honiton; *aged 108; died 1784.*

JAMES SAMPLER, of Osbaldwick; *aged 103; died 1791.*

Mrs. TATE, of Malton; *aged 106; died 1772.*

JOSEPH THOMPSON, of Walingate Bar; *aged 103; died 1781.*

Mrs. TODD, of Richmond; *aged 105; died 1789.*

Mr. WRIGHT, of Hatton; *aged 102; died 1776.*

FIFTEEN GENTLEMAN'S MAGAZINE CENTENARIANS

*All died within the first six months
of 1772.*

MARGARET AUSTIN, Widow, *aged 104, at Tenterden in Kent; died January 7, 1772.*

Mr. ANDREW COPPACK, *aged 105, at St. Catherine's; died January 10, 1772.*

Mr. DAY, *aged 107, at Lynn; died January 12, 1772.*

Mrs. EDWARDS, *aged 111, Kendal; died January 14, 1772.*

THOMAS DOLTON, of Fairlight (near Hastings), Sussex, *aged 105; died January 28, 1772.*

JOHN SIMPSON, *aged 112, at Stratford, in Essex; died February 2, 1772.*

Dr. WM. BROUGHBRIDGE, *aged 112, formerly one of the Masters of Charterhouse School; died March 31, 1772.*

JOHN NOBLE, *aged 114, at Corney, Cumberland; died April 6, 1772.*

JOHN WHALLEY, *aged 121, in Rotherhithe Workhouse; died April 3, 1772.*

Mrs. ANNIE WILLIAMS, a widow, gentlewoman, *aged 109, at Putney; died May 4, 1772,*

JASPER JENKINS, Esq., *aged 106*, at Enfield, formerly a merchant at Liverpool; *died May 25, 1772.*

Mrs. KEITH, at Newnham, in Gloucestershire, *aged 133*, who retained her senses till within a fortnight before her death. She has left £6,000 to her three daughters, the youngest of whom is 109 years of age. She has likewise left behind her about seventy grandchildren and great-grandchildren; *died June 21, 1772.*

JOHN MEGGS, Esq., *aged 101*, at Tamworth in Staffordshire; *died June 29, 1772.*

The celebrated CHRISTIAN JACOBSEN DRACHENBUG, at Aarhus, *aged 143*; *died October 9, 1772.*

ISABEL KING, widow, at Fochabers, in Scotland, *aged 108*. Her husband who died about two years before was ninety-eight years old at his decease. They had lived in the married state upwards of sixty-six years; *died October 9, 1772.*

CHARLES MACKLIN, THE TRAGEDIAN.

Aged 107. Died 1797.

Charles Macklin, the tragedian, comedian, and dramatic author, whose real name was Mac Laughlin, was a man of very varied accomplishments. Born about 1690, in 1725 he was one of the company of the Lincoln's Inn Theatre. Shortly after this date he got into a quarrel with another player, for he was a man of bitter temper, and a duel was the result. Macklin's opponent was killed. He was put upon his trial, and found guilty of manslaughter. He suffered a short term of imprisonment, but he was soon set at liberty. Quin, the

actor, detested him. He once cried—"If God writes a legible hand that fellow is a villain." However, Macklin was impervious to insult. He appears to have been a man of iron constitution, iron will, and ceaseless industry. As an actor his greatest character, in which he always maintained his supremacy while he remained on the stage, was Shylock. His performance of this part drew from Pope this direct compliment:—

"This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew."

Macklin played this character with great power when he was ninety-five. Recent inquiries have led to the supposition that Macklin was not so old as he was generally supposed to be when he died—indeed, it is possible that he was barely a hundred. But even upon this calculation he must have been nearly ninety when he played Shylock for the last time, and this upon the immense stage of Drury Lane. It is said every word he uttered was heard distinctly in all parts of the house.

As a writer he was very popular. He composed ten plays, of which two were long after his death great favourites. They were "Love à la Mode," and "The Man of the World." The latter is acted to this day, and was a favourite part with the late Mr. Phelps. Macklin is the only known author who lived to attain a century of years. One or two Greek dramatists reached ninety and past, but never touched the century. He died in 1797 and was buried in the vaults of St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

BONNIE DUNDEE'S CENTENARIAN.

"She was an old Scotch lady, who told 'Bonnie Dundee' that 'when

was young one Knox was deafening folk with his clavers, and now Claverse is deafening them with his knocks.' She had seen a tale of history, and could sum it in a couple of puns. She had lived enough for thought in the long hours of the aged, and probably interest in her remote descendants was inextinguishable and gracious. Healthy old people are, in fact, successful people. Their life has been brimful, and is running over. They have lost a hundred friends, but they have gained new affections, and take a lot of pride in the luck by which they survive, alone of their contemporaries. While life is eminently worth living, merely for its own sake, old people do not deserve, when they are sincere do they merit, much pity. Even if their life is meagre, it has made up in quantity for what it has lacked in quality. And Nature is too kindly to allow many people to decline to the imbecility of Swift's Struldbrugs, deathless, but always decaying, like Tithonus."—*Daily News*.

YORKSHIRE CENTENARIANS.

19th Century.

In this century as in the last, Yorkshire is distinguished for its centenarians. In Robinson's "Whitby" (p. 137) may be found the records of 19 deaths at one hundred and upwards, all from tombs registers at Whitby and in its immediate neighbourhood.

THE BATTLE CENTENARIAN.

Aged 120. Died about 1800.

In the churchyard at Battle (Sussex) there is an ordinary-looking gravestone with the simple fact

recorded, without comment, that the man there buried died aged 120. "When I was there," wrote Lord Lyttelton to *Notes and Queries* (1862, June 21), "some years ago, I happened to see in the churchyard an old man who said he knew the man in question, that he lay in bed for the last years of his life, but was well."

EBENEZER COBB.

Aged 110. Died 1803.

Ebenezer Cobb was born in Plymouth (U.S.A.), March 22, 1694, and died in Kingston (U.S.A.), December 8, 1803, aged nearly 110 years. For the first ten years of his life he was a contemporary of Peregrine White, the first white person born in New England, and for the last thirteen years of his life he was the contemporary of Charles Sprague, the banker-poet of Boston, who died in 1875. Mr. Cobb had the rare felicity of living in three centuries.

Three lives, therefore, all spent near Boston (U.S.A.), and literally overlapping each other, spanned the period from the landing of the pilgrims in Massachusetts, in 1620, to our own days.

"LADY" LEWSON.

Aged 106. Died 1806.

In Mr. John Diprose's "Some Account of the Parish of Saint Clement Danes," may be found (Vol. I. p. 173) a notice of this person:—

"Mrs., or as she was more commonly called "Lady" Lewson, an eccentric widow, who died in London in 1806, at the age of 106, was born in Essex Street [Strand], and marrying early, was left a widow at twenty-six. For the remainder of her days her chief companions were an old man-servant, two dogs, and a cat. In dress she was fanciful and

particular, adhering steadfastly to the fashions of her youth, when George I. was king. But she was a decided foe to cleanliness. Her rooms were never washed, seldom swept; and to personal ablutions she was an utter stranger. 'People who washed themselves,' she said, 'were always catching cold.' She used to smear her face with hog's lard, and to 'top up,' as regarded her cheeks, with rose pink. Her health was good to the last, and she cut two new teeth at the age of eighty-seven. She was buried at Bunhill-fields burying ground."

In Pink's "History of Clerkenwell" very extended details concerning this eccentric person may be found. She lived in Cold Bath Square, Clerkenwell, for ninety years. She was satirically called "Lady" Lewson from her very eccentric mode of dress. Born in 1700 (in Essex Street, as Mr. Diprose points out) of respectable parents named Vaughan, she was married at an early age to Mr. Lewson, a wealthy gentleman then living in Cold Bath Square, in the very house in which his widow was to live for nearly a century. She became a widow at the age of 26, having only one daughter living at the time.

She was left by her husband in affluent circumstances—hence her hand was sought by many needy, if handsome, suitors. She disliked married life, and it is quite possible that the pertinacity with which she was pursued by fortune-hunters in the first place drove her into the seclusion which ultimately became permanent. Her daughter once married, "Lady" Lewson rarely left her house, and almost as rarely received visitors. Especially as her long life progressed did she grow reserved and lonely.

During the last thirty years of

her existence she kept only one servant, an old woman, who died after a servitude of twenty years. This dame was succeeded by her granddaughter. In time this last married, when she was replaced by an old man, who attended the different houses in the square to go errands, clean shoes, &c. "Lady" Lewson took this man into her house, and he acted as her steward, butler, cook, and housemaid; and with the exception of two old lapdogs and a cat was her only companion.

The house in which she lived was large and elegantly furnished; the beds were kept constantly made, although they had not been slept in for about thirty years. Her apartment was only occasionally swept out, and never washed; and the windows were so encrusted with dirt that they hardly admitted a ray of light. She used to tell her acquaintances that if the rooms were washed it might be the occasion of her catching cold; and as to cleaning the windows, many accidents happened through this ridiculous practice—the glass might be broken, the person who cleaned them might be injured, and the expense would fall upon her. There was a large garden in the rear of the house, which she kept in good order; and here, when the weather was fine, she sometimes sat and read, or chatted of times past with such of her acquaintances as she could be persuaded to admit. She seldom visited, except at the house of a grocer in Cold Bath Square with whom she dealt. She had survived every relative many years and was thus left to indulge her odd tastes.

She was so partial to the fashion that prevailed in her youthful days that she never changed the manner of her dress from that worn in the

time of George I., being always decorated

With ruffs, and cuffs, and fardingales,

She always wore powder, with a large *tache*, made of horsehair, upon her head, over which the hair was turned and she placed the cap, which was tied under her chin; three or four rows of curls hung down her neck. She generally wore a silk dress, with a long train, a deep flounce all round, and a very long waist; her gown was very tightly laced up to her neck, round which was a ruff or rill; the sleeves came down below the elbows, and to each of them four or five large cuffs were attached; a large bonnet, quite flat, high-heeled shoes, a large black silk cloak trimmed with lace, and a gold-headed cane, completed her every-day costume for eighty years; in which dress she occasionally walked round the square. She never washed herself, because she thought those persons who did so were always taking cold, or engendering some dreadful disorder; her method was to besmear her face and neck all over with hog's-lard, because that was soft and lubricating; and because she wanted a little colour on her cheeks, she daubed them with rose-pink. Her manner of living was very methodical: she would only drink tea out of one cup, and always sat in her favourite chair. She enjoyed good health, and entertained the greatest aversion to medicine. At the age of eighty-three, she cut two new teeth, and she was never troubled with tooth-ache. She lived in five reigns, and had the events of the year 1715 (the Scottish Rebellion) fresh in her recollection.

The sudden death of an old lady who was a neighbour made a deep

impression on Mrs. Lewson; believing her own time had come, she became weak, took to her bed, refused medical aid, and on Tuesday, the 28th of May, 1816, died at her house in Cold Bath Square, at the age of 106. She was interred in Bunhill Fields burying-ground. "At her death," says Mr. Warner, in his MS. *Notes on Clerkenwell*, "I went over the house, and was struck with astonishment at the number of bars, bolts, &c., to the whole of the doors and windows; the ceilings of the upper floor were completely lined with strong boards, braced together with iron bars, to prevent any one getting into the house from the roof. The ashes had not been removed for many years; they were neatly piled up, as if formed into beds for some particular purpose, around the yard. Her furniture, &c., was sold by auction, and persons were admitted to view by producing a catalogue, which was sold at sixpence, and would admit any number of persons at one time.

PHŒBE HESSEL.

Aged 108. Died December, 1821.

Half-way along the pathway which meanders through the parish church yard of Brighton (now quite in the centre of the town, though once at the back of Brighthelmston), may be seen the tombstone, with its quaint inscription, set up by command of George IV. to commemorate this worthy old woman.

She was for the first twenty-one years of the century one of the sights of Brighton. Nay, for many years before the commencement of this era, she had been a celebrity in that then small and struggling watering-place. She was born at Stepney (for she was a London centenarian) in 1713, and being of

no very feminine way of thinking, or even a woman in appearance, she threw off her skirts, donned breeches, and enlisted. For many years she served as a private soldier in the 5th Regiment of Foot, and fought in different parts of Europe without once repenting of her serious masquerading. In 1745 she fought under the command of the Duke of Cumberland at the battle of Fontenoy, where she received a bayonet wound in the right arm. Her long life began in the reign of Queen Anne, and ended in that of George IV., of which much abused monarch, it is pleasant to be able to say, that he paid for the support of this ancient in the latter years of her long life, buried her, and erected that stone over her grave which is still one of the attractions of Brighton.

The legend runs, in Brighton, and it must have come from herself, for who else could have related the history, that at the early age of fifteen, she fell in love with a man of the name of Samuel Golding, a private in the regiment (5th) which was still called Kirke's Lambs, forty years after Kirke had commanded them in the west. She was a well grown "lass," and looked a woman. She wished to change her maiden name, Smith. But while Golding was indifferent, Phœbe was desperate; and so when the 5th was ordered to the West Indies, (1728) as Phœbe could not keep the regiment in England, she resolved to go with it over the seas. Then it was she abandoned skirts and carried a musket in the King's service.

We hear no more of Golding for years. Perhaps she discovered a rival. But there she was, in the regiment, and there she stayed. For five years did she serve, without once allowing her sex even to be

suspected, and she returned to England, still actively on the muster-roll of the regiment. The 5th, however, was soon ordered abroad, and then it was that she made one at Fontenoy, where the French maintain to this day, we were completely annihilated. The regiment was afterwards drafted to Gibraltar. Here Golding, who was still in the regiment, and apparently as indifferent as ever, contrived to get wounded, and so was invalided home to Plymouth. Now Phœbe's love for Golding, if it had abated, possessed her again in full force. When her adored one was no longer in the ranks with her, she had no further object either in remaining in the regiment or in concealing her sex.

Determined to be free to follow her lover she at once revealed her sex to the wife of General Pearce and unbosomed herself of the history of that love which she had never told until then. The lady being unquestionably convinced of the truth of the statement, at once obtained Phœbe's discharge and paid her expenses back to England — she leaving Gibraltar under flying colours, and quite a heroine. The moment she reached Plymouth she made for the hospital and with her tale to help her, at once got taken on as nurse at the Military Hospital where Golding lay—incurable so far as the requirements of active service went. He appears to have been quite overcome by Phœbe's devotion of many years, and upon his recovery and discharge from the army, condescended to marry the faithful creature. All their worldly wealth was his pension.

But doubtless she helped to turn many an honest penny during the twenty years of married life which they passed together. She was

widow when she had counted barely more than forty years. But she was not so faithful to Golding's memory as she had been to the man. Perhaps she did him a compliment when shortly after his death she married again, by the inference that marriage was so charming a condition that she could not live single.

So she wedded Hessel who was an honest fisherman in the days when Brighton waters teemed with fish. How she chanced to get to Brighton she never said; but there she found Hessel, there she married him, and there she must have lived for nearly another forty years in comparative prosperity, for it is only in 1792, when she must have been 79 that for the first time she is heard of in connection with parish relief. In the parish book for that year it may be found recorded on December 5th :—

"At a Meeting of the Churchwardens and Overseers, it was ordered that Phœbe, wife of William Hessel be paid three guineas to get their beds and nets, which they had pledged to pay Dr. Henderson for medicine." Honest folk evidently, who had only applied to the parish in the very last extremity.

In January of 1793, Phœbe was once again a widow. Nor had she any desire to be wedded to parish relief. Her neighbours rallied around her, and bought her a donkey, by which she immediately began hawking fish, which she purchased from her husband's old companions and fellow-fishermen. Directly she was on the road she became active, and in a very little time was showing herself a good citizen.

On October 30, 1792, the Brighton mail had been stopped and robbed while on the road to Shoreham, it is true of only half a sovereign, on its way from a soldier to a friend.

Phœbe obtained sufficient information to convince her that two men, Rook and Howell, were the highwaymen, and very fearlessly she gave information, without dread of consequences. Rook was a poor simpleton of twenty-four, Howell a man of forty. Both were tried, found guilty, hanged, and hung in chains, April 23, 1793. The remains of the gibbet whence they swung were only burnt by some gypsies so late as 1822, a few months after Phœbe herself had gone to her rest.

Early in the century, when she was a little over 90 years of age, infirmities began to tell upon her, and being no longer able to get about the country, she was taken into Brighton workhouse, which she found very ill-suited to her general tastes. By 1806 she had had enough of it, for by a minute of the vestry (August 14th, 1806) we find the entry :—"That Phœbe Hessel be allowed a pair of stockings, and one change on leaving the poorhouse."

She now set up that fruit and sweet-stuff stall which, through a dozen years, was, in connection with herself, so familiar a sight to all Brighton. She sat at the end of the Marine Parade, near old Steine Street, enthroned in a chair, her basket on her left. She made a good thing of it in a small way. Her regimentals were very noticeable : a brown serge dress, a white apron (always spotlessly clean), a black cloth cloak with a hood, always worn up in all weathers, and bound upon the head with a red kerchief, spotted with white. Over this went a mob cap, and over the mob cap a black turban bonnet. Her shoes were tremendous, while her arms were, except in summer, muffled in long woollen mittens. As age progressed she suffered from the cold winds which still are known

to prevail at Brighton. Finally, a formidable walking-stick replaced the musket of the time of the early Georges—good for help in walking, and good also for beating off the boys. This walking-stick was, in 1871, presented by Mr. Alderman Martin to the local museum, where, however, it is not now in evidence.

Hone ("The Year Book" Sept., 22, 1821) says: "I saw this woman to-day in her bed (to which she had recently taken) to which she is confined from having lost the use of her limbs. She has even now, old and withered as she is, a fine character of countenance, and I should judge from her present appearance must have had a fine though perhaps masculine style of head when young. I have seen many a woman at the age of sixty or seventy look older than she does under the load of 108 years of human life. Her cheeks are round and seem firm, though ploughed with many a small wrinkle. Her eyes though the sight is gone are large and well-formed.

"As soon as it was announced that somebody had come to see her she broke the silence of her solitary thoughts and spoke. She began in a complaining tone, as if the remains of a strong and restless spirit were impatient of the prison of a decaying and weak body.

"Other people die and I cannot," she said.

"Upon inciting the recollection of her former days, her energy seemed roused, and she spoke with emphasis. Her voice was strong for an old person, and I could easily believe her when upon being asked if her sex was not in danger of being discovered by her voice, she replied, that she always had a strong and manly voice. She appeared to take a pride in having kept her secret, declaring that she

told it to no man, woman or child during the time she was in the army.

"For you know, sir, a drunken man and a child always tell the truth. But I told my secret to the ground. I dug a hole that would hold a gallon, and whispered it there."

"While I was with her the flies annoyed her extremely. She drove them away with a fan, and said they seemed to smell her out as one that was going to the grave. She showed me a wound she had received in her elbow by a bayonet. She lamented the error of her former ways, but excused it by saying: 'When you are at Rome you must do as Rome does.'

"When she could not hear distinctly what was said, she raised herself in the bed and thrust her head forward with impatient energy. Suddenly she said, 'When the king saw me he called me a jolly old fellow.'

"Though blind she could discern a glimmering light, and I was told would frequently state the time of day by the effect of light."

* * * *

Phœbe had nine children, but none of them lived beyond childhood except her eldest son (by the second husband), and he went away and became a sailor. She had not heard of him through many years before she died.

She appears to have attracted the king's attention, in August, 1814, by heartily joining in the National Anthem at a festival held to commemorate the short peace which followed upon the exile of Napoleon to Elba. From that date she wanted never again. As the "oldest inhabitant" she sat on the left of the vicar, she being then 101 years of age. "And many presents," says Mr. Alderman Henry Martin in his

History of Brighton," "in silver and one pound notes found their way to her."

An etching of the good soul was almost immediately published, a subscription was raised, and her last years were assured. So late as July in the last year of her life (1821), at the age of 107, and totally blind, she assisted at a festival held in Brighton in honour of the coronation of King George IV.; she was present "on the Level" in a carriage, and seated with the vicar.

For some years previously to her death she enjoyed half-a-guinea weekly given by the king. It is said that George IV. offered her a guinea per week, but that she refused it, saying half that sum was enough to maintain her.

At her funeral (Dec. 19, 1821) there was a great crowd. Nor was she in her death forgotten (apart from her tombstone, erected at the expense of the king), for when a Brighton oddity, one Corporal Staines, who had served on the "Victory," lay dying, it was his earnest request that he should be buried at the foot of Phœbe's grave. The parish authorities were tender-hearted enough to carry out this wish. Phœbe's tombstone begins in these days to look ancient, but it is still upright, and is a fitting memorial of the one woman centenarian who served as a soldier for a length of years in the British army. Peace to her ashes!

MRS. GARRICK.

Aged over 100. Died 1822.

This lady, the widow of the celebrated actor, David Garrick, whom she outlived 43 years, must have been well over a hundred, for she owned to 98, while as she made her first appearance as a dancer in England after having created a

name in Vienna, it is not very likely that when she appeared in town she said her age was more than it was. On the contrary, if she were like all other dancers known to experience, she would have knocked several years off.

Mrs. Garrick hated to have her age spoken of, and very rarely referred to it. When she did it was in all probability to protest against her being supposed over a hundred, a theory to which she had an intense aversion. She is an example, not infrequent, of old age in connection with the footlights. She came to London from Vienna under the name of La Violette, and at once captured Garrick's honest fancy. As all the world knows she was left very well off. She spent her winter days chiefly in London, and in her husband's house on Adelphi Terrace, Strand, now we believe the Crichton Club, though at the corner the J. G. men will insist upon it their house was the mansion in which this good woman breathed her last.

She was by no manner of means an invalid, while a fine temper with which she was born clung to her to the last day of her life. She never tired of the theatre, and visited it to the last day of her existence. Nor did the ancient ballerina grow tired of being a coquette, for in the morning on the very day of her death she ordered her maid servants to spread her newest and best gowns over the chairs in her sitting room that she might decide which would best become her at Drury Lane that evening—whither she had arranged to go in order to be present at a private view of Elliston's just completed improvements.

Not a shade of slander ever rested against the character of La Violette. Even that rigid discipli-

narian of morals Queen Charlotte, patronised Mrs. Garrick. We may well understand how completely Charlotte had routed out all that was to be known about Davy's widow before she decided to give her a character for ever by calling upon her. This she did at her country-house at Hampton, a handsome pile which may still be seen from the river. The visit was impromptu, and the Queen found the rich but industrious old lady peeling onions for pickling, like the steady old German housewife she was. Queen Charlotte had a rare flash of wit. "Bring me a knife," cried she, "I will peel some onions too." The example set by the chaste if snuffy Charlotte was accepted. Two of her sons, afterwards George IV. and William IV. now and again called on Mrs. Garrick, and the minor members of the royal family followed suit.

J. T. Smith, of "Rejected Addresses," fame has written most of what has been said in print of Mrs. Garrick's last days. She appears to have received him very graciously, and said she would be glad to see him at Hampton—where she still carried on Garrick's noble country-house. Upon the occasion he asked her for her autograph—"Madame," he said, thanking her for her invitation to Hampton—"You are very good, but you would oblige me exceedingly by honouring me with your signature on this day." "What do you ask me for? I have not taken a pen in my hand for many months. Stay, let me compose myself; don't hurry me, and I will see what I can do. Would you like it written with my spectacles on, or without?" Preferring the latter, she wrote, 'E. M. Garrick,' but not without some exertion.

"I suppose now, sir, you wish

to know my age. I was born at Vienna, the 29th of February, 1724, though my coachman insists upon it that I am above a hundred. I was married at the parish of St. Giles at eight o'clock in the morning, and immediately afterwards in the chapel of the Portuguese Ambassador, in South Audley Street—Mrs. Garrick being a catholic."

A day or two after Mrs. Garrick's death, Smith went to the Adelphi, to know if a day had been fixed for the funeral. "No," replied George Harris, one of Mrs. Garrick's confidential servants, "but I will let you know when it is to take place. Would you like to see her? She is in her coffin."—"Yes I should." Upon entering the back room on the first floor, in which Mrs. Garrick died, Mr. Smith found the deceased's two female servants standing by her remains. He made a drawing of her, and intended to have etched it. "Pray, do tell me," said Smith, to one of the maids, "why is the coffin covered with sheets?"—"They are their wedding sheets, in which both Mr. and Mrs. Garrick wished to have died." Mr. Smith was told that one of these servants had incurred her mistress's final displeasure by pouring out a cup of tea, and handing it to her in her chair: "Put it down, you hussy: do you think I cannot help myself." She took it, and after she had put it to her lips she died.

Indeed, she had sworn now and again, throughout the last years of her life. She was a remnant from the 18th century, when everybody swore more or less except John Wesley and Whitefield. She was especially up when anyone attempted to cheat her, which she would attribute to a supposition on the cheat's part that she was too old to look after her own interests.

ejected Addresses Smith tells of a stonemason who brought in his bill with an overcharge of sixpence more than the sum agreed upon; on which occasion he endeavoured to appease her rage by thus addressing her: "My dear Madam, do consider—" "My dear Madam! what do you mean, you d—d fellow? Get out of the house immediately. My dear Madam, indeed!"

She died very suddenly (Oct. 1822), as it has been said, while seated in her arm chair. She had come to town for the winter season. The tea-cup was at her lips, when suddenly without effort, pain, or probably knowledge of her end, she died. She was buried in Westminster Abbey with her dear Davy—assuredly the first and last ballerina to be buried within that orderly and historic pile.

HENRI FRANCISCO.

Aged 135 in 1822. Died 1830 (?).

In 1822, there was living (two miles from Whitehall, on the Salem Road to Albany, in the State of New York), a Frenchman, Henri Francisco, who is believed on good grounds to have been at the time in his 135th year. He seems to have been born in 1686, to have been expelled from France in 1691, (probably on account of the revocation of the edict of Nantes in 1685; to have witnessed the coronation of Queen Anne in 1702; to have fought under the Duke of Marlborough; to have emigrated to America early in the eighteenth century; to have been wounded in the defeat of the British under Braddock in 1775; and finally, to have been carried to Quebec as a prisoner during the Revolutionary War. There is obscurity as to the date of his death, but he certainly had ceased to exist in 1830.

THOMAS TAYLOR.

Aged 108. Died 1827.

In Wimbledon Churchyard is a board over a grave, recording the death of Thomas Taylor, died December 25, 1827, aged 108 years.

LITITIA COX THE JAMAICA CENTENARIAN.

Aged 160. Died 1838.

There is no well authenticated case of anyone having got above Parr in the matter of age, though Mrs. Lititia Cox, who died in Jamaica, in 1838, claimed to have been a young woman when Port Royal was destroyed by an earthquake, June 9, 1692—which would have made her over 160.

MRS. WILLIAMS,

OF BRIDEHEAD.

Aged 102. Died 1841.

That this lady lived to the age of 102 is beyond all question. Even Mr. Thoms gave way in this instance—perhaps not too jubilantly. In this case the centenarian was no peasant, or wandering labourer, but a person of birth, and therefore all cavil as to registry would be out of place.

Mrs. Williams, the widow of Mr. Robert Williams, of Moor Park, Herts, and Bridehead, Dorset, died at the latter place October 8th, 1841. The inscription on her monument in the parish church, written by her son-in-law, the then Vicar of Harrow (the Rev. J. W. Cunningham), states her to have been "the youngest daughter of Francis Chassereau, formerly of Niort (France). He was exiled from his native land at the age of fourteen, and upon the mad promulgation of the Edict of Nantes."

Her grandson, Mr. Montague Williams, of Woolland House, Blandford, was good enough to furnish *Notes and Queries* (2nd S., Vol. XI., p. 58), with some account of his grandmother's wonderful and very charming life. He set out by saying that he had heard his grandmother's eldest son, the late Mr. Robert Williams, say that he had dined with his mother on Christmas Day for seventy consecutive years without a break, probably an instance *per se* of such a remarkable occurrence, even in our festive-loving country.

From the various letters written by Mr. M. Williams in 1865, it is learnt November 13th was always regarded by her family as her birthday, and all her descendants quite believed, as they were right in believing, that she was born in 1739, the year she always maintained in which she saw the light. The fourth and youngest daughter of Francis Chassereau of Marylebone, she was married to Mr. Robert Williams, a banker and M.P. for Dorchester. He died in 1814, aged seventy-nine.

These particulars still exist in her Bible, now the property of one of her grandsons, Mr. Robert Williams of Bridehead.

Her great-grandson had (1865) in his possession a Bible, given by the centenarian to his father on his twenty-first birthday in 1820. Therein may be seen his name, and an inscription written by her in very vague and straggling characters. The grandson placed this note under his grandmother's writing :—

"Written in her 81st year, having the cataract in both eyes. C. M. W."

It is delightful to be able to record, as affording hope to aged people who are suffering, or may suffer from this terrible complaint, that

in this same year the aged lady underwent an operation, and was perfectly restored to the sight of both eyes. Nothing more delightful in the history of centenarianism is known, than the incident of this lady in her eighty-third year again opening that Bible in which she had scrawled her grandson's name two years previously, and on an opposite page once more writing his name—but upon this occasion in a good clear hand. She saw then admirably, and retained her sight perfectly to the last. Again the grandson made a note :—"Oct., 1822. Written in her 83rd year."

She was fond of giving Bibles to her family. In 1830 she presented one to Admiral Sir H. L. Baker, Bart., and once again she wrote—the name of the recipient and the date, and her own name added. Below, her grand-daughter (Lady Baker) added the words : "Written in her ninety-first year."

She retained her physical and intellectual powers with an equal balance. As an instance of her bodily strength, in 1829 being then in her ninetieth year, she held her great-granddaughter and godchild in her arms at the font. As an instance of her intellectual capacity, on the occasion of her grandson Mr. Robert Williams, of Bridehead, coming of age, (January 23rd, 1832) she being then nearly ninety-three, upon the tenantry and guests drinking her health, she stood up and returned thanks in a speech which was neither brief nor vapid. She spoke quickly, clearly, and was in no hurry to become silent.

Like all the Huguenots whom France was sufficiently rash to cast from her shores, she was equally vigorous, keen, and religious. She was by no means passive during the final ten years of her life. Her grandson (Mr. Montague

iams) told Mr. Thoms, that she made codicils to her will in her own handwriting in 1834 and 1835, in which later year she was eighty-nine. Furthermore, when she was within a day of being 100 she made a considerable and even important alteration in her will, one which was quite accepted and acted upon after her death. At ninety-five she was about so busy as habitually to make breakfast for a large party of children and grandchildren, always bearing in mind the different tastes of each, from the eldest to the youngest.

Her memory was magnificent. She could recite all the familiar texts of the various services, many hymns, and pre-eminently, the catechism. Her memory of events was very fine, even to the description of a house on old London Bridge where she had lived. Four days before she died, going out driving with Mr. Williams she said over her catechism for the first time. However, within the next two years of her life the memory was breaking. But she never forgot the paternal and maternal French of her youth—for her father had taken to himself an English French bride.

To all this it must be added that she cut three teeth at or near ninety years of age. On Christmas Eve she was in the habit of giving the sovereign a-piece to all her great-grandchildren saying, or words to the same effect, "You will not very likely again have a sovereign when you by an old lady of —" whatever the number happened to be.

These gifts went on until she was aged 102.

After she had passed a century the noble old lady appeared unlike an ordinary being, her flesh and countenance appearing quite different from that of ordinary old persons.

MRS. DRURY LOWE.

Aged 103. Died 1848.

There can be no doubt about this instance—that of a member of a county family whose whole life was before the world and passed upon the same spot. Mrs. Drury Lowe, of Locko Park, Derbyshire, (whose maiden name was Steer) was born July 21, and baptized July 23, 1745—as appears by the register of Burton Latimer. She died Nov. 13, 1848, and was buried at Denby, Derbyshire—aged therefore over 103.

MRS. SUSANNAH LEWIS.

Aged 102. Died 1852.

This is an instance of a centenarian who could have had no possible object in asserting her age to be more than it really happened to be, while as the recipient of a government pension for nearly sixty years her declarations made to the Admiralty prove the genuineness of her claim to be a centenarian. She was left a widow when 43, and received her pension through 59 years as the widow of David Lewis, Surgeon in the Royal Navy. She was born in London Sept. 17, 1750, and died at the Vicarage, Corwen, North Wales, Oct. 28, 1852. She was a good example of a hardy Londoner, and was one of the very few centenarians who have dated from the metropolis.

Mrs. Lewis resided at the Vicarage of Corwen, for the last twenty years of her life, which were singularly cheerful and painless. She ate not six ounces a day and drank milk chiefly, finding that tea and chocolate disagreed with her. However, upon going to bed she generally took a couple of tablespoonfuls of port in twice as much warm water, in which mixture she soaked

a soft biscuit. She was exceedingly charitable, giving away the whole of her income, so that, according to her wish, she went out of the world as poor as she entered it. Her death was deeply deplored by the poor of Corwen, and especially by the then aged Vicar of that place. He was a distant relative of her husband's. He devoted all the time he could spare from his parish to this lady, and never allowed a day to pass without reading to her some favourite author—the chief of whom was Jane Austen, whose "Pride and Prejudice" she was never tired of hearing, while over its gentle satire she was always ready to laugh—Mrs. Bennet being her beau ideal of absurdity.

REV. GEORGE FLETCHER.

Aged 108. Died 1855.

In *The Illustrated News* for March 10, 1855, may be found a portrait of this thorough centenarian, taken four years before he died, and when he was 104. Mr. Fletcher was born on February 2, 1747, at Clarborough, in Nottinghamshire. From six years of age he had been brought up in the tenets of Wesley, and he remained a member of that body till his death. He spent eighty-three years of his life in active pursuits. He was twenty-one years a farmer, twenty-six years he served his sovereign in the army—was at the battle of Bunker's Hill, and followed Abercrombie into Egypt, where he gained the respect and esteem of his officers. He then entered the West India Dock Company's service, where he continued thirty-six years, when he retired on their bounty, still preserving up to within six months of his decease that astonishing activity of mind and body

for which he was so remarkable, often travelling great distances by rail, and pursuing his holy calling, preaching two or three times a day, regardless of personal inconvenience, for objects of charity and benevolence.

When his portrait (1851) was taken, he walked for that purpose from Poplar to Messrs. Beards' photographic establishment in King William Street, City; and after the sitting he walked back to Poplar, refusing to ride, although a conveyance was placed at his service.

Mr. Fletcher would now and again preach in the Primitive Chapel, Nottingham, and the announcement that a man over a hundred years old would be seen in the pulpit, never failed to obtain an enormous congregation. His sermons were very vigorous and direct. He generally made some reference to the events of a battle in which he declared he had acted with great bravery early in life. After his death, however, *The Nottingham Journal* declared that he could not have been born when this battle took place.

He preached in London within a year of his death. He stood then in the pulpit of Finsbury Chapel, Moorfields (June 21, 1854), and preached for nearly two hours. He was announced to preach twice that day—once in the morning, once in the evening, and he fulfilled his engagements—so that at 107 he spoke through four hours on one particular day. The announcement of these sermons ran as follows:—

"Finsbury Chapel, Moorfields. Two sermons will be delivered Wednesday, June 21, 1854. Services to commence in the afternoon at three, evening at seven; by the Venerable George Fletcher, in his 108th year. For the benefit of an aged minister."

rejoicings had been held at this hotel on February 2, 1853, when

Fletcher attained his 106th year; and portraits of the minister were sold in the vestry. They were inscribed with a statement to the effect that he had lived in the reigns of four kings, and herewith sent Majesty, Queen Victoria. The ever mistrustful Mr. Thoms made enquiries concerning this centenarian of the Vicar of Clarendon, who could find no entry in the baptismal register for 1747, nor any George Fletcher, nor did he discover anyone of that name baptised in the parish church until nine years afterwards. However it does not follow that baptism necessarily proves a man's age. Fletcher always maintained that he was not baptised until he was ten or twelve.

The records of Chelsea Hospital make Fletcher 101 years of age at the time of his decease, while the age returned by the Civil-Officer of Pensioners at the time of the death was 108.

MISS ELIZABETH GREY.

Aged 108. Died 1856.

Sir George Cornewall Lewis, who was for many years the great exponent of the theory of centenarianism, supported and upheld this instance. (*Notes and Queries*, May 24, 1862.) He wrote:—

"Since the publication of my former article on this subject (Centenarianism), I have been favoured by Mr. W. R. Cunningham, 86, Great King Street, Edinburgh, with an account of two cases of centenarians, supported by authentic evidence, (for second see Miss Agnes Forester).

"The first case is that of Miss Elizabeth Grey, who was born in May, 1748, and died on the 2nd of

April, 1856; she had, therefore, nearly completed her 108th year. The following is an extract from the Register of Births in the parish of Dolphinton, Lanarkshire:—

'May 17, 1748. Elizabeth, daughter to William Grey, of Newholm, writer at Edinburgh, and Mrs. Jane Dickie, his lady, born May —, and baptised May 17th. Witness to the said baptism John Dickie, of Corstorphine Hill, and Mr. James Bradfute, minister of the gospel at Dunsyre.

'Extracted from the Register of Births &c. in the parish of Dolphinton, by Smollett Whitelaw, Sess. Clerk, Dolphinton, 21 Feb. 1849.'

"Miss Elizabeth Grey was never married; she was the aunt of Mr. Cunningham, and I am assured by him that there can be no possibility of any mistake as to her identity. During the last fifteen years of her life she resided at Edinburgh, in the house now occupied by him. She was in perfect possession of her faculties nearly up to the time of her death, and latterly, although confined to her room, she could move about. Within a few years of her death she could play at cards without the use of spectacles. She could repeat and was fond of repeating most of the psalms of David, in the Scottish metrical version. She was quite aware of her great age, and was very proud to speak of it. Her memory for old events was acute."

Rev. Mr. TOTTY.

Aged 101. Died 1857.

"LL.D." (*Notes and Queries*, June 7, 1862) wrote: "Sir G. C. Lewis will probably be interested in being informed of the fact, which is undoubted and beyond question that during the last six or seven years (1857-62) three persons have died

in the county of Sussex, all of whom lived to upwards of 100 years. They belonged to the gentry of the county, were well educated, and were to the last in the habit of mingling more or less in society. In that society, years before they became centenarians, their age was a topic of conversation and remark; any exaggeration as regards age would, therefore, have been easily detected by those who were their contemporaries or a few years their seniors. I believe no Sussex person who was acquainted with either of these individuals ever entertained a doubt of their being of the age ascribed to them. They were: Mr. Totty, rector of Fairlight, Mrs. Mary Turner, of Ditchling, Mrs. Constable, of Cowfold. As to the first, in Murray's 'Handbook to Kent and Sussex' (p. 232) will be found this entry. 'The church has been most carefully restored throughout; the chancel at the cost of the rector, the Rev. Dr. Totty, now (1857) in his 101st year.'

Writing of this gentleman (1862), Mr. S. F. Creswell, the Castle, Tonbridge, Kent, said:—

"I fancy his death has been announced in the papers since that date. [He died at Bath, December, 1857.] He was in the habit, while able, of going to Bath yearly in his carriage, by way of protesting against railroads."

As to Dr. Totty being a centenarian there can be no question. He was well known in society, and his death caused some talk but very few years previously to Sir G. C. Lewis's investigations. Yet, strangely enough, that gentleman had never heard of the case—another proof, if any were wanting, how little likely we are to obtain evidence that we do not want to acquire. Sir George had

allowed the belief of the impossibility of centenarianism to take possession of him, and to such an extent as to urge him to publish his views, while the evidence he should have required lay quite to his hand. Nevertheless, in most of his intellectual relationships, Sir George was a man of the very highest attainments, and of perfect critical ability.

SAMUEL CLEAVER.

Aged 103. Died 1859.

In Broadwell Register Samuel Cleaver is said to have been baptized Nov. 20, 1756, and buried Oct. 26, 1859.

Rev. J. K. FLETCHER, D.D.

Aged 100. Died 1859.

It was by way of the correspondence of Mr. J. W. Thoms with the Rev. Dr. Fletcher (incumbent of Quethiock) in reference to the impostor Day or Dawe, that Mr. Thoms was obliged by Dr. Fletcher with the particulars of two centenarians, one Snell (*see*) the other the writer's own father. In this letter to Mr. Thoms (Aug. 5, 1871) he observed incidentally, "My late father, the Rev. John Kendall Fletcher, D.D., of Callingham, Cornwall, a magistrate, commissioner, &c., died about twelve years ago in his one hundredth year."

HANNAH FULBROOK.

Aged 109. Died 1860.

Mr. W. Coles, parish clerk of Odiham gave (1862) the following information from the Parish Register relative to the baptism and burial of an old woman who died in that town in 1860. She was

baptized Dec. 7, 1750, at Odiham
 buried there Feb. 12, 1860.
 e never left her native town for
 length of time, married there,
 l there bore children. She was
 very fine example of the adage
 t grief does not kill, for one of
 sons was hanged at a date far
 ck in her 110 years of life, at
 nchester for a burglary in
 iham town itself. The mother
 nained there, and almost to the
 l of her life she frequently
 erred to the "poor fellow" and
 ould say had he lived he might
 ve come to more than a hun-
 ed.

MARY DOWNTON.

Aged 106. Died 1860.

The history of this "love child" as first printed in *Notes and Series* (Aug. 19, 1865). The writer said:—"For the first two years after my ordination, while curate of Allington, near Bridport, I was a weekly visitor to a bed-ridden woman, (a parishioner) named Mary Downton. She died November 4th, 1860, at the (generally supposed) age of 106 years, retaining all her mental facilities except sight, which she had gradually lost some years before I became acquainted with her. I can recall many a pleasant conversation with this oldest inhabitant. Strange to relate, the earliest incident of her life, which she could recall to memory was being carried out, from her father's burning cottage, 'within an inch of her life,' at the age of four years. Considerable doubt was thrown upon the alleged age of this person, but the evidence in favour of her own statements when near her death was very satisfactorily confirmed. From her daughter the gentleman who had stated the case ascertained that

her mother's name was Mary Hardeman, that her birth-place was called Thorncombe, near Chard, and that she was illegitimate. The 'Thorncombe Register' affords the information, 'Baptism in 1761. Mary daughter of Mary Hardeman, bastard-born, baptised March 22nd.' Thus if the baptism took place immediately after birth, this would make the good soul barely 100 when she died. But she had said more than once to the gentleman from whom all these particulars came, that she recollected walking to church to be christened at about the age of four or five. In all probability she was six. The assumption that this recollection was false and that she was baptised at her birth is uncalled for. On the other hand it may be readily understood that the mother put off from year to year, with the weakness of a shamed woman, the ultimately necessary process of baptising her hapless offspring. Throughout the history of centenarians no case has been better proved than this of the 'love child,' Mary Downton, born Hardeman."

MISS AGNES FORESTER.

Aged 105. Died 1861.

Sir George C. Lewis was the sceptic as to centenarians who made public this case. He wrote (1862):—

"Mr. Cunningham likewise (see Miss E. Grey) informs me that he has recently seen an authentic certificate of the birth and death of a Miss Agnes Forester, who was born at Perth on the 4th October, 1755, and died there on the 20th February, 1861, and therefore at an age exceeding 105 years. The document is in the possession of the Registrar of Births and Deaths in the Register Office of Edinburgh.

"It will be observed that the case mentioned in my previous article, and the two cases supplied by Mr. Cunningham are all of female lives. I have not hitherto been able to obtain conclusive evidence of a male centenarian." Sir George Lewis did not make many efforts.

JOHN PRATT.

Aged 106. Died 1862.

He was born, according to Mr. Tyerman's history of the man, at Grendon - Under-Wood in Bucks, March 5, 1756, the eldest of three children. His father was a shoemaker, a diligent man, who died at 75. Pratt declared that his mother completed her 105th year, and his great grandmother her 111th. He married at 23 one Maria Dellamore, who died when he was nearly 50. By her he had 17 children. He remained single for more than 30 years, when at the age of 80 he married again. He showed great forgetfulness as to dates and events in his family history, but he remembered distinctly and related with great minuteness a story of his being bewitched and going to a wise man for relief. He could quite recall what this wise man said about Neptune, and Sol, and Luna, all of which "rigmarole" induced the indefatigable Mr. Thoms to assume that Pratt was a settled gipsy, or had associated greatly with gipsies, and had learned so much of their cunning, jargon, and powers of mystification as to become quite an adept.

Pratt died in September, 1862, and in the midst of the controversy going on concerning his age, which was doubted in many quarters. He was much tormented during the last year of his life by curious visitors, who took him luxuries which he would have been much better

without. The obituary notices of the death of this centenarian gave his age as 106. Inquiry brought to light the fact that from 1800 to 1815 he was employed in the herbal department of Apothecaries' Hall, London. For twenty years before his death he was known in Oxford and its vicinity as a gatherer of herbs for medicinal purposes. He retained his faculties in a very remarkable manner, and though now and again unable to leave his house he never became quite an invalid, for a very short time before his death he was seen enjoying his walks through the streets of Oxford. He had then for some time given up gathering herbs, especially by night, the most fitting time he would maintain for harvesting simples. He was another example of extreme temperance in eating and drinking, especially the latter. He mistrusted all drinks but those he made himself from herbs he himself gathered, and these were always taken cold in moderate quantities. For years he ate no meat, but towards the end pressed to do so by visitors more hospitable than wise, he took small quantities of animal food. Like most centenarians he passed away without trouble or apparent pain.

The controversy which was carried on just before, and after Pratt's death, was simply withering. Sir George Lewis and Mr. J. W. Thoms were both sceptics in relation to this unfortunate centenarian. One of the attacks runs as follows:—

"A pamphlet has recently been published at Oxford by Mr. Tyerman, a medical practitioner in that city, entitled 'Notices of the Life of John Pratt now in his 106th year.' In this pamphlet it is stated that the writer of it is personally acquainted with him. The account of John Pratt's birth and age given

must, therefore, be presumed
st on his own testimony. The
unt (p. 4) is that he was born
rendon-under-Wood, Bucking-
shire, on the 5th day of March,
, and was the eldest of three
ren, that his father who was a
emaker, and a diligent man, died
ne age of 75; that his mother
pleted her 105th year, and his
t-grandmother her 111th.
ough the kindness of a friend I
e ascertained from the Rev. M.
shall, the incumbent of Gren-
-Under-Wood, in Buckingham-
e, that the parish register of the
od (which is preserved) con-
s no entry of the baptism of
n Pratt at or near the year
6, although it contains various
ries of baptisms, marriages and
ials of persons named Pratt from
2 to 1783. The old man him-
has no entry in a Bible or
er documentary evidence in
firmation of his statement and
account of his age appears to
t exclusively upon his own
emory."

Hermetrude (*Notes and Queries*
62 Vol. I, p. 399) who supported
att urged as follows:—"Having
en personally acquainted with
ld Jack Pratt' during a residence
some years in Oxford I must ask
rmission to record my firm be-
f that he is not a man likely to
srepresent his age for the sake
attracting sympathy. He is still
ing, in great poverty, and the
lowing details have been pro-
red from himself. My informant
nd him much weaker, and in his
inion he cannot live long.

"Old Pratt states that a copy of
e register of his birth is in
ossession of Miss D. Plumtree, of
niversity College (I have been
ld, not by Pratt, that Dr. Acland
so has a copy). He was not born
1756, as stated in Mr. Tyerman's

pamphlet, but in March 1755.
This date he has always named both
to my correspondent and myself.
His eldest son, William Pratt was
born at South Shields (I think about
1783-8) and died in Shoreditch
(London) at the age of 80. The age
of the son, if certified, will of course
to a certain extent prove that of the
father. The date which I have
given above for W. Pratt's death is
not his father's statement, but my
own deduction from some of his
remarks, and may therefore be one
or two years in error."

However, it turned out that Miss
Plumtree did not possess Pratt's
register (which was never found),
but she had those of two of his
brothers. Pratt appears to have
confounded these two registrations
with his own; nor could he remem-
ber the date of his eldest son's birth.
But he maintained that he recol-
lected the coronation of George III.
in 1762. Pratt appears in the last
year or so of his life to have had
no farther faith in the simples he
had gathered through so many years
in all places within the boundaries
of our island, and which he had
administered to many generations,
for in 1862 he was attended by
several ordinary doctors. These
medical men appear to have agreed
in the opinion that the complaints
from which he was suffering were
not those of a man of eighty or
ninety, but one of a much greater
age. It is, however, difficult to tell
by what reliable means these gentle-
men arrived at this remarkable
opinion. Nothing was said by them
as to the nature of Pratt's com-
plaints; nevertheless, their testi-
mony is of great weight in demon-
strating the rare age of this simple-
monger. It should be added that
there were many persons in the
village where he was born who
quite remembered the family.

John Pratt's case continued to excite very considerable controversy through 1862-3; while many believed the man to be truthful, many assumed he was self-deceived, and more maintained that he was a thorough impostor. Mr. W. D. Macray, of Magdalen College, Oxford, took up the investigation in May of 1862, just before Pratt's death. His evidence is as follows:—

"I called upon John Pratt in company with the curate of the parish in which he lives, with the view of ascertaining, if possible, the evidence by which his assertion respecting his age may be proved. I found him in wonderfully good health, but nearly blind; feeble in his limbs, but with his voice strong, and faculties remarkably clear. His appearance is very venerable, and his countenance pleasing. His chief serious infirmity appears to be a constant wakefulness; and he complains beside of pains in his head, and of becoming soon confused and dizzy on attempting to think much. He is, however, cheerful; and appears to be waiting his appointed time in a spirit of pious trust and hopefulness. He is not, I am glad to be informed, in any actual distress, although poor; one head of a college, and several members of the university, frequently contributing to his relief, and the visitors of the parish affording occasional help.

"With regard to his age, he gave us the date of his birth the same which is mentioned in Mr. Tyerman's pamphlet, viz., 5th March, 1756. With reference to the fact that the entry of his baptism is not found in the register of Grendon-under-Wood, he says that he was baptised privately when he was a week old, and since registers were not kept with scrupulous exactness in the last century, as well as somewhat

later, it is probable that the entry may, through this cause, have been forgotten. He states that he had a family Bible in which the date of his father's birth, as well as his own, was entered; that it was from this entry that his own knowledge of the date was derived, and that he is certain of the accuracy of his recollection."

"This Bible he used to carry with him in his wanderings, until it was worn out. He then copied the entries on a paper, which he carried with him in a tin box, but at length during one of his journeys, the box was lost, and with it was lost the evidence he had of his age. I forgot to ask him when his first marriage took place, the register of which would, of course, afford sufficient proximate proof concurrent with that of the baptism of his eldest son. But he incidentally mentioned, in the course of conversation, that the first of fourteen Scottish peregrinations was made in the year 1780. It is hardly possible that a self-taught Oxfordshire simpler, all of whose travels were made on foot, would be induced to extend his tour to the wilds and moors of Scotland, for the sake of a few rare herbs not to be met with in the rich dells and woods of the south, before he had reached that age which, if Pratt's memory be correct, this year assigns."

But even Mr. Thoms admitted that poor be-questioned Pratt died at last in 1862.

MR. FOSTER, of Derby.

Aged 100. Died 1863.

On the 8th of December in this year a number of gentlemen of Derby gave a dinner to this centenarian upon his attaining his 100th year. The case of this

gentleman is unique as perhaps that of the only centenarian who ever made a public after-dinner speech. At all events, he is the only centenarian of whom a public speech has been recorded.

The chairman on this occasion was singularly happy in his jocularity. He started thus :—

“Our juvenile friend who sits on my right, looking more like a young archbishop than a centenarian, betrays no signs of rapidly failing health, notwithstanding a life of great activity and vicissitude. Born on the 8th of November, 1762, in the first American War he joined the militia, and when the French revolution broke out he went to Egypt with General Abercrombie. At the general's death Mr. Foster returned home with 104 men, all more or less afflicted with ophthalmia. His friends persuaded him to leave the army, which he did on the day Nelson died.

“Being of an active turn of mind, and having also a taste for the fine arts, he in the first place invented and patented a machine, and in the second instance he turned his attention to the fine arts. At the death of his son he took to the publishing trade, having compiled some charts, many thousands of which have been sold to clergymen and other ministers, and found ready acceptance in public and private schools.

“Gentlemen, I cannot detain you by relating all the incidents of our guest's varied life. I trust that you will not consider that we are doing homage to a second Blue-Beard when I inform you that our guest has been the husband of five wives, that he has had seventeen children, that the first-born if now living would have attained her seventy-eighth year, and that the last and only one which has been left, we hope to solace and comfort him in

his declining days, only a few days ago celebrated her tenth birthday. As a proof that Mr. Foster is not a Blue-Beard, I need only point out these facts to prove his veneration for and high appreciation of the fair sex.

“‘Though the snowy locks of our guest attest increasing years, yet, if we look at his clear complexion, his bright eye when it flashes up, though at times a little dimmed withal, his clear intellect and retentive memory, we will not despair of being spared to meet him again even another year. We all hope that years of happiness and prosperity are still in store for him; that, however, is a matter entirely within the dispensation of a gracious providence, to whose behests we must all humbly bow. But when our old friend has entered the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death, having faith and hope in a bright future, he will at least have the consciousness of knowing that he did not pass away from our midst ‘unwept, unhonoured and unsung.’

“‘Gentlemen, I give you ‘Continued health, happiness and prosperity to our juvenile friend, Mr. Foster.’

“When three times three cheers had been very lustily given, the centenarian, without any nervousness, but with evident signs of not being accustomed to public speaking, observed :—

“‘Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen, The present moment is the happiest of my life. I am grateful and thankful for your compliments. I am not used to making speeches, but I know how to be grateful. Providence has been kind to me. I am an old man, but get my living by my own labour, and I hope to be able to continue to do so as long as there is any necessity. I hope to live a few years longer to meet my

friends on a future occasion. You are kind to me, and I am grateful to you. Good health, prosperity, and happiness to you all in this world, and blessings in the world to come.'"

This account is taken from the *Derbyshire Advertiser*, November 14th, 1862. Mr. Foster died very shortly afterwards.

MRS. MARTHA LAWRENCE.

Aged 103. Died 1862.

The press for February, 1862 very freely published the following notice:—

"On the 17th instant at Richmond, Surrey, at the advanced age of 103, Mrs. Martha Lawrence, loved and revered by all with whom she was connected in life. In death she is mourned with affectionate remembrance by her family and friends."

M. GALLOT.

Aged 105 in 1862.

MADAME GALLOT.

Aged 103 in 1862. Both died 1868.)

An old man, aged 105, named Gallot and residing in the Rue des Ecoles, Paris, presented himself in the month of September, 1862, at the War Office to receive an allowance from the State. His papers were in perfect order, and he had no difficulty whatever in proving that he was the man whom his papers stated him to be. Indeed, so rigid are the official ways of France in relation to certificates of birth and documentary proof of residence in general that it would be next to absolutely impossible to deceive the authorities. A Frenchman is pursued by his papers from his birth to his grave, and he can do nothing without them. Until quite

recently he could not even move from one place to another without having his papers signed by various authorities. It may therefore readily be understood that a man at last applying for a military pension would have to demonstrate his identity very rigidly. Gallot had no difficulty in proving his case, as it was sufficiently shown by the fact that a military pension was allowed him, although he had quitted the service 47 years before he made his application for help. The old man had served nine years under Louis XVI., and through all the wars of the Republic and the First Empire. Finally, he quitted the army upon the fall of Napoleon, he being then 58 years of age, and having seen nearly 31 years' service.

But the more remarkable fact in connection with this good fellow's journey to Paris took the shape of the fact that he was accompanied by his wife, who was only two years younger than himself. They both appeared to enjoy excellent health, and expressed their opinion that they had no thoughts of leaving the world yet awhile.

Unfortunately, however, the great city did not appear to agree with them. In all probability, as in old Parr's case, they were too much fed, and their healths too frequently drunk, and they soon hurried away to their quiet home, where for nearly half a century they had worked in the fields and lived with exceptional plainness and sobriety. They rarely, if ever, ate meat, never drank wine, or even milk, and appear to have found their chief luxury in simple herb teas. They were bright, fresh-looking, cheery persons, with good sight and hearing; their teeth if not perfect, still in very good order.

This case appears very important

because of the almost equal age of the husband and wife. Either both were exceptionally perfect in organism and health at their birth, or it is certain that regimen and care will tend, when there is no organic disease, to prolong life to a great age.

Gallot lived six years after his return to the mountain home, when he was found dead in his little garden. His wife almost immediately followed him, her death being attributed to sheer grief—a proof that great age does not necessarily annihilate the affections.

MRS. ESTHER STRIKE.

Aged 103. Died 1862.

In February, 1862, *The Times* contained this phenomenal entry in relation to longevity:—

“On the 14th instant (February, 1862), at Winkfield, Berks, Mrs. Esther Strike, at the advanced age of 103 years, possessing all her faculties to the last, leaving three sons aged respectively 79, 77, and 75 years; 24 grand-children, 51 great-grand-children, and two great-great-grandchildren; beloved and respected by all who knew her.

The late Sir George Cornwall Lewis, who for many years maintained centenarianism to be an impossibility, is the authority for the truth of this lady's age. Writing in *Notes and Queries* (1862, Vol. I. p. 281) he says:—

“I have recently obtained the particulars of a life exceeding 100 years, which appears to be perfectly authentic, and to admit of no doubt. Mrs. Esther Strike was buried in the parish of Cranburne St. Peters, in the county of Berks, on the 22nd of February, 1862; she was the daughter of George and Ann Jackman; and she was privately bap-

tised on June 26, 1759, in the parish of Winkfield, in the same county. She was, therefore, in her 103rd year. Certified extracts of the two registers proving these facts have been furnished me through the kindness of the Rev. C. J. Elliott, vicar of Winkfield.”

Sir George Lewis, however, had the courage of his opinions. He wrote at this date as follows, concerning his general views upon centenarianism:—

“It may, I believe, be stated as a fact that (limiting ourselves to the time since the Christian era) no person of royal or noble rank mentioned in history, whose birth was recorded at the time of its occurrence, reached the age of 100 years. I am not aware that the modern peerage or baronetage books contain any such case, resting upon authentic evidence. I have been informed that no well-established case of a life exceeding 100 years has occurred in the experience of companies for the insurance of lives. These facts raise a presumption that human life, under its existing conditions, is never prolonged beyond a hundred years.

“The only conclusive proof of a person's age is the contemporary record of his birth, or the declaration of a person who remembers its occurrence. If there are now persons living whose age exceeds 100 years such evidence surely can be obtained, and its production would remove all doubt on the question.

“The writer of these remarks has investigated several cases in which life was alleged to have lasted beyond 100 years, but it is difficult to obtain documentary evidence of the fact.

“It is argued in favour of the belief in rare cases of excessive longevity that they would be in

analogy with other ascertained peculiarities of human physiology. There have been men of extraordinary height, there have been minute dwarfs, there have been men of enormous fatness, there have also been men of extreme tenuity; why then, it has been asked, should there not be a few centenarians. This question may be answered by saying that such a duration of life does not seem *a priori*, inconsistent with the laws of nature, but that the existence of very tall and very short, of very fat and very thin men is proved by the indubitable evidence of eye-witnesses, whereas there is not on record, in published books any conclusive proof of a life which has been prolonged beyond 100 years, under the existing conditions of our physical nature."

However, towards the end of his life Sir G. Lewis found reason to modify his opinions, and he admitted that centenarianism existed, but that it was very rare. On the other hand nobody has ever asserted that it was very common.

WILLIAM WEAVER.

Aged 102. (1862.)

The Berkshire Chronicle, (Feb. and March 1862), first brought this case into notice by stating that there was living at Sevenoaks, (Kent), one William Weaver, who was in his 102nd year. Mr. J. W. Batchelor, of Odiham, put himself into communication with the centenarian, and as a result he received the following letter:—

"Sevenoaks, April 16th, 1862.

"SIR,

"In answer of yours of to-day, respecting the age of William Weaver, I must inform you that he was born at Frantfield, in Sussex, and was baptized at Bufted, in the

same county. He has a certificate of his baptism, which was in 1762, but from an entry in a family Bible which contains the list of the births of the whole family, he was born December 27th, 1760, and he is now in good health, and gets out every day when the weather permits. He has to-day walked out from home nearly a mile, and back.

"I am, yours truly

"ELIZABETH WEAVER.

"Granddaughter of Wm. Weaver."

SARAH COOPER.

Aged 104. (1862.)

Odiham appears to have been highly favoured (*see* Hannah Fulbrook) in the matter of centenarians, for in 1862 there was living there one Sarah Cooper, who was baptized in that town on May 4, 1758. She was, therefore, then 104 years of age.

JOHN MURRAY.

Aged 107. Died 1862.

In *The Lancet* for May 31, 1862, will be found a notice of the death of John Murray, a native of the parish of Dornoch, (Scotland), a pauper of the parish of Latheron. He died at Boultach, Latheron-wheel, at the very great age of 107 years. It is singular that this man and one Donald Tarrel (*see*) died on the same day. Both were strong and healthy men, and were, in their better days, engaged in out-door employment. Here are two instances of centenarians dying on the same day, in the same parish in which both had been born! Surely, these instances should have satisfied not only Sir Geo. Lewis, but even Mr. W. J. Thoms himself.

MR. JAMES BASHFORD.*Aged 114. Died 1862.*

There may be read in *The Cambridge Chronicle* for May 31, 1862, as follows:—

"May 8, at Syddan, Meath (Ireland), aged 114, Mr. James Bashford. Up to the moment of his death he was in full possession of all his faculties. He was born in the year 1748, and from that time up to the period of his demise he enjoyed almost uninterrupted good health."

MR. C. S. GREAVES'S, CENTENARIANS. (1862).

This gentleman wrote in this year (June 21st,) to *Notes and Queries*, to the effect that he had been enquiring after the baptismal entries of a number of alleged centenarians, in Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire. Of these he knew personally two—one of them going to a magistrate's meeting at Mayfield, a distance of nine miles, when she was a hundred and four. She was a little stout woman, with no appearance of great age, and excepting that she was deaf had all her faculties about her. This gentleman says that he has frequently remarked that very old people have very clear and strong voices.

DOWAGER LADY BLAKISTON.*Aged 102. Died 1862.*

There may be read in *Notes and Queries*, (1862, Vol. I., p. 500,) the following paragraph:—

"The present Sir Matthew Blakiston has just entered on his eightieth year, and his venerable mother is now 101. This Spring

her portrait taken when she was 100 has been hung at the Royal Academy."

The Hants Advertiser (Dec. 6, 1862), contains the following, under the head of "Lymington":—

"The venerable Dowager Lady Blakiston has at length departed this life at the ripe and rare age of 102 years well authenticated. The Sir Matthew Blakiston of our chancel, whose monument has by this time assumed an appearance of antiquity, was her husband. His father was Lord Mayor of London in 1760, and walked as such at King George the Third's Coronation."

SARAH LEE.*Aged 103. Died 1863.*

She was born at Lasham 1759—she was living in 1863 at Alton in Hampshire in her 104th year. She was a daughter of Robert Trimmer and Margaret his wife, and at that date was then in the possession of all her faculties, and was able to move about and assist herself. Her teeth were well preserved. This statement is made on the authority of Rev. G. F. Smith, Curate of Lasham. She died before the year was at an end.

DONALD TARREL.*Aged 104. Died 1862.*

There may be read in *The Lancet* (May 31, 1862), the following paragraph:—

"Two deaths of centenarians are chronicled by the *Northern Ensign*. The first is that of Donald Tarrel, a pauper of Wick parish, but residing on the estate of Forse, parish of Latheron (of which parish he was a native) for some years." Tarrel had reached the great age of 104 years (see John Murray, 1862.)

GEORGE SNELL.*Aged almost 100. Died 1863.*

The interesting case of George Snell was made public during the investigation of the facts in relation with one John Dawe, *alias* Day who passed himself off as 116 and was but 87. Mr. Thoms, as usual, annihilated this pretender to centenarianism. This gentleman received a letter (1871) from a gentleman in the west, who said: "In a branch of my own family there lived and died an old servant who was one hundred years in the family. His name was John Day, he came as a parish apprentice, and died at the age of 108, having lived all that time in the parish of Quethiock, Cornwall, where he was buried by the Rev. Dr. Fletcher . . . He was reported to have been 116, having been christened when he was eight years old . . . When he died my father calculated by his daily average consumption that he must have drunk enough cider to float a first-rate line of battle ship."

Mr. Thoms proved that this fraud was not over 90. But his case is interesting as showing an instance of advanced age being achieved without reference to strict temperance.

It was during the correspondence about Dawe or Day's case that Dr. Fletcher mentioned Snell. He said, "One man was buried here September 23, 1863, whose age is recorded at 99 years, which I have reasons for believing to be correct. His name was George Snell, a respectable farmer, who at a period not long preceding his death was able to move about with a large measure of facility." Hence it came to pass that Mr. Thoms in depriving one alleged centenarian of his borrowed honours proved the

existence of two, Snell and the Rev. J. K. Fletcher (*see*), unquestionably true cases of centenarianism.

CHELSEA HOSPITAL CENTENARIAN.*Aged 106. Died 1863.*

Mr. F. Chance, *Notes and Queries*, (June 7, 1862) communicated the particulars of this case. He wrote:—

"Last year I saw a pensioner in Chelsea Hospital who was said to be 106 years old. In this case imposture was impossible, for the pensioner's age would be traced by the army lists. His presence in Chelsea Hospital would demonstrate that there could be no question about his years."

MISS MARY BILLINGE.*Aged 112. Died 1863.*

The case of this centenarian was made known by Mr. John Newton of West Derby Street, Liverpool, in 1863. That gentleman wrote to *The Times* that he had attended this maiden lady in her final illness. She was a gentlewoman of means and died at her residence, Edge Lane, Liverpool, on December 20, 1863, aged 112 years and six months. She was born at Eccleston, near Prescot, on the 24th of May, 1751. She retained her faculties in a very remarkable degree to the last, and was never known to have been confined to her bed for a single day until the week preceding her decease.

Some doubt being cast upon this statement, Mr. Newton at once published a further communication which appeared in *Notes and Queries*. He observed:—

"I may say that it was only by a mere accident we were able to

obtain even the scanty particulars furnished. The old lady had outlived all her early friends. She had long been looked on as a sort of fossil relic of a bygone age. Her old servant, who had faithfully served her for nearly fifty years, died two years before her mistress. She was the only depository of the secret as to the great age of her mistress, and, though often questioned, she never communicated it to anyone. But to a sister, who succeeded to her place beside Miss Billinge, she had said how years before, it had been necessary (in connection with a will) to obtain needful certificates of relationship or identity, and that Miss Billinge had then sent her to Eccleston, near Prescott, assuring her that was the place of her birth. We had traditional and other evidence to the same effect. She had, it is known, a brother and sister, and she was the senior of both. The brother died in 1817, aged forty-seven years. The Health Committee in this town employed an officer to make enquiries as to this matter. They, I understood, after some research declared themselves quite satisfied with the truth of the certificate. Miss Billinge would never speak of the past, and always resented any reference to her great age. She had long been bent almost double with years, while her skin hung extremely loose, and was most curiously wrinkled. An old lady, herself upwards of eighty, who called to see her in my presence, looked quite fresh and youthful in comparison."

It is interesting to state that in the pursuit of information at Prescott, an inquirer found that the parish clerk of the church there was himself ninety years of age, and still doing duty. Whether or not it is proved that Miss Billinge

was confounded with a possible aunt of the same name born in the same place twenty-two years previously, it is certain that the inscription on Miss Mary Billinge's tombstone in Toxteth Park Cemetery runs to the effect that she died at the age of 112 years and 6 months.

MR. WILLIAM PLANK.

Aged 100. Died 1867.

This is another of the cases to which Mr. William J. Thoms has given his rare warranty. This gentleman died at Harrow, having just completed his 100th year. His age is demonstrated by official records beyond even Mr. Thoms's power of dispute. The case was brought under public notice in the *Standard* (Nov. 9, 1867). The article, written by Mr. W. Winkley, F.S.A., of Harrow, ran as follows:—

"I have thought it worthy of public record that Mr. William Plank, an old inhabitant of this town has this day attained the remarkable age of 100 years, having still the use of all his faculties, with the exception of that of vision, which he lost eleven years ago. He has been an inhabitant of Harrow, occupying the same house 56 years. He is the son of James and Hannah Plank, of Wandsworth, Surrey, where he was born on Saturday, November 7, 1767, and baptised November 17 of the same year. It may be of farther interest to record that for a year (viz., in 1780), he was a school-fellow of the late Lord Lyndhurst. They were at the academy conducted by Mr. W. Franks, of Clapham. Mr. Plank quitted this place in 1781, leaving young Copley still at the school.

"Mr. Plank was originally in-

tended for commercial pursuits, and was bound apprentice at Salter's Hall, City, on March 22, 1782, to his elder brother, a calico printer, and a member of the Salters' Company. Mr. Plank is and has been for many years 'father' of the Salters' Company. He was admitted to the freedom and livery of the company and the city on October 20, 1789, and therefore may be considered almost to a certainty the father of the city of London. I saw him out walking with the assistance of a friend, the day before yesterday, and at his house to-day. He is quite cheerful, and well able to receive the congratulations of his friends and neighbours. Before he came to Harrow he was frequently ailing."

Mr. Thoms took this case in hand, and pursued it rigidly. He found Mr. Plank's baptismal register, and farthermore his city indentures, and the date (October 20, 1789) when he took up his freedom. "At which time," says Mr. Thoms—it is to be feared with evident reluctance—"as no one can take up his freedom until he is of age, Mr. Plank must have been twenty-one and upwards."

On the day when Mr. Plank attained his one hundredth anniversary, the Salters' Company, whether by accident or design is not known, held a monthly court, and dined afterwards, as a matter of course. While at table, the chairman received this telegram:—

"Mr. Plank, Harrow, to the Master, Warden, and the Court of Assistants. Mr. Plank has this day completed his 100th year, and in good health and spirits. A party of friends dine with him to-day." The answer returned, ran:—"The company are now drinking the health of our centenarian colleague."

He died twelve days after. Like so many centenarians, he expired almost immediately after the completion of 100 years. Whether it is the excitement created about them by their friends' greetings, which breaks down the vitality, or a sense of desolation on leaving 100 years behind them, it is very certain that the majority of centenarians pass away immediately after their 100 years have sounded.

A very droll point occurs in this case.

According to Mr. Plank's baptismal entry (Nov. 20, 1767), supposing him to have been baptised the moment he was born, then he dying Nov. 19, 1867, would have been wanting one day of his century, and Mr. Thoms would have triumphed, for that gentleman is quite satisfied if he can push an alleged centenarian one day back beyond 100 years. But in this instance, it is quite evident he felt that he must give the infant twelve days' grace. He dared not push the argument so far as to urge that baptismal registration is ever coincident with birth.

But he took an objection, and observed ("Longevity of Man," 1879), "The 19th Nov. closed the life of the father of the Salters' Company, who survived his century only twelve days. That he was those twelve days more than 100 years old may fairly be concluded as *although there is no evidence of the precise date of his birth there can be little doubt that he was born on Nov. 7—the day which he always kept as his birthday, and which was only thirteen days previous to that on which he was baptized.*"

Mr. Plank died with perfect calmness. So much so, indeed, that it was difficult to say at what moment he breathed his last. To the final moment of his release he

was calm, cheerful, and perfectly fearless.

PEGGY LONGMIRE.

Aged 104. Died 1868.

In May of 1868, the north country press contained the following notice of this centenarian:—Peggy Longmire, well known in the Westmoreland district, died at Troutbeck on Sunday last, having completed her 104th year on the 15th April. She was quite a notable character in the district, and was the grandmother of 'Tom' the celebrated champion wrestler. Two of her three children survive her, as do also 10 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. Peggy enjoyed her usual robust health until about a month past, during which she suffered considerably, but remained perfectly conscious to the hour of her death."

The following character, given to her when she was a servant with Mr. G. Browne, attorney, of Troutbeck, shows that she was made of sterling stuff:—"To all whom it may concern: these are to certify that Margaret, the daughter of John Atkinson of Applethwaite, in the parish of Windermere, served me as a diligent, faithful, and honest servant for two years—viz., from Whitsuntide 1783 to 1785, and that during all that time I never saw, heard, or had reason to believe but that she was virtuous and modest. Witness my hand this 23rd Oct., 1788, George Browne, Troutbeck."

The Kendal Mercury, May 30, 1868, gave these farther particulars:—

"She was the daughter of John and Mary Atkinson . . . who were members of the Society of Friends, but occupying a small farm under

the then Rector of Windermere they were induced to conform to the Established Church. This occurred when Margaret was in her thirteenth year, and she perfectly remembered her baptism, there being seven of the family all baptized at once. When she was with Mr. Browne as servant (*see above*) she was 20 years of age, and it was then she tasted her first cup of tea, which was introduced at the christening of one of Mr. Browne's children. But Peggy never took kindly to it, preferring her oatmeal porridge, and meat and potatoes. At the age of 27 she married James Longmire, a very fine yeoman, 15 years her senior. He died in 1831, having contrived to lose all his property, so that Peggy had to buckle to again. This she did as a nurse, an occupation which she followed up to 80 years of age, after which her parish and her friends together found her a scanty living. She had three children (sons) of whom one died in 1863, and the other two were living at the time of her death—one in England, the other in Australia. It was her grandson, Thomas Longmire, a worthy descendant of Peggy's gigantic husband, who was the celebrated champion wrestler. Her father died at 68, her mother at past 70, while her mother's mother reached her hundred years.

"In the fall of 1867 Peggy took to her bed, but she retained all her faculties to the last, with the exception of a slight deafness. Her memory was good until the very day of her death, and unlike many old persons she could remember events of recent times. But owing to her position she did not take much interest in historical and political events. Peggy opened the local ball on the occasion of the marriage of the Prince of Wales, 1836.

"Her Majesty, on becoming acquainted with her circumstances, forwarded £3 to the old woman in 1867. The baptismal register of Mrs. Longmire exists in Windermere parish church. She lived all her long life in its neighbourhood. The funeral service was read over her by the Rev. W. Sewell, himself verging on 90 years of age. A large number of old friends attended the funeral at Jesus Chapel, Troutbeck, where a tablet was set up commemorating her long life."

J. F. SMITH.

Aged 105. Died 1870.

This centenarian expired at Ashstead Common, Surrey. He was very hale and robust to within a month of his death. There seems to be some doubt as to his being quite so old as 105, but the most searching investigation, granting he was baptised immediately after birth, does no more than barely reduce him below a century of years. We, however, maintain that in the last century, and amongst the lower ranks of life, baptism very rarely followed close upon birth—there being a general prejudice in favour of a child knowing, or seeming, to know something of what was going on when he was taken to the font.

MR. JACOB WILLIAM LUNING.

Aged 103. Died 1870.

This very remarkable case was another of those the truth of which Mr. Thoms, after searching investigation, had to admit. The instance was first mentioned in *Notes and Queries* (April, 1868). The communication was signed W. H. Cottell.

"There is now living at Morden College, Blackheath, Mr. Jacob William Luning, born at Hamelvörden, in the kingdom of Hanover on May 19, 1767. To enable him to succeed to some property which belonged to his mother, he obtained forty-one years ago a certificate of his baptism. A verbatim copy is subjoined. Mr. Luning was the elder of two sons; his brother Conrad died in London nearly fifty years since.

"He married at Spalding, Lincolnshire, August 4, 1796, Eleanor, daughter of Captain Sands, and by her had fifteen children. Excepting deafness, Mr. Luning is at this time in full possession of all his faculties of mind and body; his teeth and hair are comparatively sound and complete; the latter has, however, been whitened by the snows of one hundred winters. He takes a daily walk in fine weather, and reads without glasses. These aids he discarded on receiving his SECOND SIGHT some ten years since.

"This gentleman claims descent, through his mother, from Christina, sister to Martin Luther, and I hope in a short time to be allowed to inspect some family papers said to prove such to be the fact."

"Certificate of Baptism extracted from the church books at Hamelvörden therein written in the following words:—

"In wedlock born 1767 (one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven) the 19th May, the son of the here resident clergyman, Meinhard Conrad Luning, and his wife Magdalena Dorothea, born Pratje, baptized the 21st instant, and named Jacob Williams.

"Witness, the Inspector of Customs, Mr. Luning of Verden.

"That the above is truly extracted I hereby certificate by my

own handwriting, signature, and seal of office, *in fide*m.

“Frederick David Werbe, superintendent and clergyman at Hamelvörden in the district of Kehdingen, Kingdom of Hanover, the 30th March, 1827.

“(L.S.)”

In May, 1869, the Hon. and Rev. John Harbord, of Morden College, wrote to *The Times*, saying that “a member of Morden College had just completed his 102nd year, in perfect health and in possession of all his faculties, though certainly deaf.”

Mr. Thoms was up in arms, and fought this case bravely. However, the evidence was overwhelming. It was on June 23, 1870, that the long life of this nobly descended gentleman (103 years, one month, and four days) at last ceased. Immediately after his death a piece of evidence was produced which satisfied even the sub-librarian of the House of Lords, Mr. W. J. Thoms, himself:—

At the age of 36 he had insured his life in the Equitable Society.

“No man,” says Mr. Thoms, “ever makes himself older than he is when effecting an insurance, and few live sixty-seven years after doing so.”

The Registrar-General himself forwarded to *The Times* (July 8, 1870) a report of the result of his personal investigation of this case. He wrote:—

“Jacob William Luning, who died on June 23, aged 103 years, at Morden College, Blackheath, was born at Hamelvörden, in Hanover, on May 19, 1767. He came to London at the age of 23, and was a boarder at Mr. Duff’s school in Tooting; he was naturalised and married Ellen Sands, at Spalding in Lincolnshire in 1796 (age 29); insured his life for £200 in the

Equitable Society at the age of 36; had twelve children born and christened, of whom six survive—three sons and three daughters—of ages ranging from 53 to 66. These children were born, therefore, when he was between the ages of 37 and 50, from eight to twenty-one years after his marriage.

“Not succeeding in business himself, he became bookkeeper in some of the first mercantile houses in the city, and was engaged in this vocation, until he attained in 1858, the age of 91. He was admitted a member of Morden College, on March 31, 1859, having in his memorial to the trustees stated his age to have been 91 on his previous birthday.

“These particulars have been supplied to the Registrar-General by Robert Finch, M.D., Medical Officer of Health for Charlton, who has also answered some enquiries and supplied documentary evidence which satisfactorily establish the facts.

“Dr. Finch states, on the daughter’s authority, that from the date of admission into the College until the last few months, the old man enjoyed good health, and with the exception of some deafness, was in the possession of all his faculties. His strength gradually gave way, and for about a fortnight he was unable to leave his bed. The light that had burnt for 103 years went out.

“The father, Meinhard Conrad Luning, pastor of Hamelvörden, died at the age of 51, the mother at 78½. They had six children, of whom two died in infancy, one at the age of 22, and the other three grew up. Jacob William was the third child. He was eleven in descent from Christina Luther, sister of Dr. Martin Luther.”

The Equitable Society reporting

on the life at 36 returned it good, but he had suffered from small-pox. The bonuses which were never touched, had raised the £200 policy to £1,292. 10s. He is the only instance in the records of insurance companies of a client who passed 100 years.

ROBERT HOWLISON.

Aged 103. Died 1871.

A reference to *The Echo* (January 23rd, 1871), will enable the reader to peruse a pleasing account of how a purse of twenty-five sovereigns was presented to Robert Howlison, of West-Linton, Peebleshire, on his 103rd birthday.

This led a gentleman of nearly *ninety-four* to write to *Notes and Queries* (February, 1871) and report this presentation, he adding, "Most cordially do I, who am in humble expectancy of my ninety-fourth, wish my venerable senior *multos et felices*—with the like testimony attached to every one of them."

But Robert did not outlast the year. Whether the twenty-five sovereigns were too much for his nerves or not it is certain that their recipient died October 30th, 1871.

The following notice of his death appeared in *The Peebleshire Advertiser*, November 25th, 1871:—

"On the 30th ult. there died at West-Linton, Peebleshire, Robert Howlinson, who had almost reached the age of 103 years . . . The deceased was born at Channel Kirk on Handsel Monday, 1769. He had the misfortune to lose his father when only nine years old, which caused Robert and his elder brothers to be sent, at an early age, to work. He was engaged in country service, and for many years followed the occupation of a ploughman, but falling into indifferent health [Howlison was evidently not one

of the robust centenarians] he exchanged his calling for that of a shepherd, which he pursued till upwards of eighty years old, when the infirmities of old age compelled him to relinquish it.

"Though necessitated from his earliest years to labour, he did not neglect the means either of mental or spiritual improvement. He was always a good reader, especially of those religious classics long so dear to the pious of our land, the perusal of which tended, in no slight degree, to gain for our countrymen the proud distinction of being the most intellectual peasantry in the world.

"Robert in his early manhood lived at Stow, and while there joined the Secession Church. After applying to be received into membership, he was kept back a year that the Minister might have his eye upon him during that time, for as Robert said: 'it was nae bairn's play to join the kirk in thae days.' About the beginning of the century he removed to the neighbourhood of Peebles. . . . afterward he resided in Newlands Parish where he long remained and attended Linton Meeting House. Here he became an elder.

"His last place of service was in Dumfriesshire, and when unfitted longer to pursue his daily toil he returned to Linton, where he lived until his death. For many years he described himself as waiting. . . . Sustained by a wonderful buoyancy of spirit, he relished a good joke, was full of anecdotes and wise sayings, and could delight a company with his sallies of wit. He could recall the arguments of preachers he had heard in his youth, and combat their opinions when he thought them unsound, at the same time he could take a lively interest in events which were passing around

m. When fifty years of age he married, and his widow survives him. They have had a numerous family. Although unfortunately towards the close of his life he lost the greater part of his savings, he never received nor could think of accepting parochial relief, alleging that God, whom he had served for his lifetime, would sustain him during the few years he had to live."

Hence followed the presentation of the twenty-five pounds—which he did not live to spend.

ROBERT BREWER.

Aged 106. Died 1871.

There may be found in the *Lampshire Telegraph*, (September 10, 1871), an account of the life and death of this centenarian.

"Robert Brewer has died in a court in Havant Street, Portsea, at the remarkable age of 106 years and one month. We learn that he was born at Gosport, on the 7th August, 1765, and though it might have been supposed that the deceased had, as other veterans had done, made a mistake as to the year, the exactness of the date is confirmed by the events at which he was present.

"When about twenty years of age he joined the navy where he remained until he was twenty-nine. He was in an action off the coast of Ireland, was on board the flagship of Admiral Byng during the Mutiny of the Nore, and was captain of the main-top on board the 'Robust,' one of the ships forming Lord Howe's fleet on the glorious 1st of June, 1794. On the last occasion he was severely wounded by a cannon shot in the left ankle and side, and was discharged with a pension of £11 per annum, which

six years ago was augmented to £20. 12s. Since that time he has lived in Gosport and Portsmouth, and carried on the calling of a waterman and fisherman, until about six years ago, when he was compelled on account of the wound in his foot, to retire from active work."

Mr. Thoms necessarily attacked this instance—but he did not pull the veteran down more than a year or two below the century, and he then had to assume that he was baptised immediately after birth—which may be doubted.

THE BRIGHTON CENTENARIAN.

THOMAS GEERAN, or
GUERIN.

Aged 106. Died 1871.

In certain Brighton newspapers early in 1870, might have been read an announcement of which the following statement is an abridgement.

"To be published by subscription, 1s. to subscribers; non-subscribers, 1s. 6d. A sketch of the life of Thomas Guerin, the Brighton Centenarian . . . with a photograph of Thomas Guerin by M. Lombardi of Brighton . . .

"Thomas Guerin, who is now in his 104th year, was present at the capture of Seringapatam in 1799; at Corunna, in 1809, he received two gunshot wounds; at Vittoria a severe sabre cut in the head. He escaped through Waterloo and entered Paris with the victorious armies; was discharged invalided from the 71st Highlanders in 1819 with 114 days' pay, but without any pension, and is now as may be supposed, in very straitened circumstances. . . ."

This pamphlet was published by Mr. Robert Hardwicke, 192 Piccadilly, and at *The Advertiser* office, Brighton.

The good soul died on Nov. 20, 1871, when the following account appeared in *The Times* :—

"I send you the following particulars of the life of a veteran, Thomas Geeran, who died a few days ago in the infirmary of the Brighton Union, at the advanced age of 105 years.

"These particulars I gathered from the lips of the old man himself, and from the inquiries which I have made I have every reason to believe that they are reliable. Should you deem them worthy of record I should feel obliged by your inserting them in *The Times*.

"Thomas Geeran was born on May 14, 1766, at Scarriff, in the county of Clare, Ireland. Bred a sawyer, he continued to work at his trade till the year 1796, when he enlisted in the 71st regiment.

"He shortly afterwards went out to India, and on the breaking out of hostilities with Tippoo Saib, the Sultan of Mysore, he was engaged at the siege of Seringapatam, which was carried by storm on May 4, 1799.

"On his return to England he accompanied his regiment on the expedition to Walcheren, and thence, after a short interval, he proceeded with large reinforcements to join the army of Lord Wellington in the Peninsula, where he continued to serve until the conclusion of the war in April 1814.

"He was engaged in almost every battle fought by our army after our arrival in the Peninsula, and was severely wounded on three occasions.

"On the return of Napoleon from Elba he was sent with the army under the Duke of Wellington to Belgium,

and concluded his active military career at Waterloo. In 1819 he was discharged from the service.

"For many years he gained his livelihood by working at his old trade as a sawyer, and when he became infirm he contrived to eke out an existence by the contributions of the charitable, among whom, I believe, may be mentioned Her Majesty the Queen, and several other members of the royal family. He retained the perfect use of all his senses to the last, and his memory, which was wonderfully retentive, remained unimpaired to the end of his life."

This letter was signed "H. P." whose statements Mr. Thoms contested in *The Times*. In reply "H. P." explained that he had made inquiries at Scarriff through a Father O'Malley, the parish priest of that place, when he was in the neighbourhood in 1867, and that the result of the inquiry was that a man then in Scarriff named Geeran, aged 72, informed Father O'Malley, that he had an uncle named Geeran who had enlisted in the army when he himself was only two years old, and that the family had never heard of their relation since. H. P. urged that this evidence would tally with Geeran's own statement, as to the date of his enlistment. The writer also urged that the fact of his not having a pension (a point upon which Mr. Thoms, who could not trace Geeran's name in any regimental records, wrote very severely) was owing, as the man himself admitted to his having been discharged from the service for misconduct, that the same cause would account for his not having the Waterloo medal; that in all probability the old man had served in a false name, as did nine out of ten soldiers in his day; and finally, that he had absolutely forgotten his

sumed name. H. P. added—"I ever in my life saw a man more content with age than was Geeran."

Dr. Tuthill Massy, of Brighton, now dashed into the contest by way of a letter to *The Times*, (Nov. 25, 1871).

"Having made a *post-mortem* examination of Thomas Geeran, I cannot let Mr. Thoms's letter pass without a few remarks on his incredulity, which, with your permission, I shall briefly state in reply to Mr. Thoms's evidence, a part of which runs thus—

"I have before me four different photographs of Geeran, taken on what he said was his 104th birthday, and I feel convinced that any physiologist would at a glance pronounce them to be portraits of a man nearer 80 than 104 years of age."

"I have compared these photographs and it is surprising how unlike each other they are. One looks twenty, I may say thirty years older than the other three, although taken on the same day. But let Mr. Thoms speak on. He says:—

"The indications of extreme age which are so marked in the portrait of a genuine centenarian are entirely wanting in these admirably executed photographs of Thomas Geeran."

"I have the photographs of two genuine centenarians — Matthew Greathead, of Richmond, Yorkshire; the other Richard Purser, of Cheltenham, aged 112. Their likenesses are both younger-looking than Geeran's, although their heads are larger. Geeran had a small, compact head, very well formed, and his features were small, thus leading a superficial observer to picture youth where really age existed.

"Again, it appears childish asking for the registered birth of a publican's son in an obscure village

in a remote Irish county, when it is known to Mr. Thoms, as stated in the 'Introduction to the Life of Geeran,' that 'in those distant days registration was not much thought of by doctors or divines.' So careless were even the noble family of his Grace the Duke of Wellington, that even to this hour it is a question whether he was born in Dangan Castle, co. Meath, or in the city of Dublin.

* * * *

"Mr. George Long knew Geeran for ten years, and at the end of that period said, 'I entered his age when he first called upon me, and since, on each birthday, he has repeated the same, adding one year correctly. Now, at the end of ten years he appears younger than when I first knew him, looking then a very old man. Mr. Long also testified to Geeran's love of reading translations from the classical authors, and when questioned remembering what he had read.

"Mr. Thoms refers with great confidence to the enquiry made at Chelsea. This I can answer by stating there is an old soldier in the Brighton Workhouse who applied in vain for forty years, and at the end of that time had his name discovered and got his pension.

"Geeran accounted for his having foolishly enlisted at the ripe age of thirty. He held the appointment of clerk in the office of a wealthy firm in Waterford, and was raised to an advanced post as agent to the branch house in America. Before starting he joined some acquaintances to have a jolly farewell, got drunk, and enlisted—which to the last, he mourned.

"The examination of Geeran's remains has revealed much that is mysterious. No one suspected the amount of disease within the old soldier. How he could have

battled through life, and ascended the Brighton hills for years, out in every weather, with a heart closely bound up in the pericardium, a lung closely adhering to the ribs, and cancer of the pyloric orifice to his stomach, is far more difficult of comprehension than the useless folly of those who question his great age."

Geeran was a tall man, 5 feet 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches before he began to stoop, his hair was brown, his eyes blue, and his complexion fresh.

EDWARD COUCH.

Aged 110. Died 1871.

The Western Daily News of January 31, 1871, announced the death on the previous day, of this centenarian, who died at Torpoint. He had been one of the crew of the "Victory," at the battle of Trafalgar, and also fought under Lord Howe on the glorious 1st of June in 1794. At the time of his death he had enjoyed for many years a Government pension. His memory never failed him, and he was singularly cheerful. Torpoint, in the parish of Antony, is in Cornwall. There he was born Aug. 2, 1761. At 19 he joined a privateer (1780), was pressed, ten years later, on board the "Romley," fought under Lord Howe on board the "Gibraltar" (1794), was taken prisoner by the French (1797), and was held by that enemy between two and three years. He also fought on the "Majestic," at the Nile, on the "Victory," at Trafalgar, and on the "Romley," at Boulogne. He left the service almost immediately after Waterloo, he being disgusted with the piping times of peace.

He was buried with full naval honours, in the churchyard of Antony. He had been baptised in

1776, at the age of 15. To this statement great objection was taken (1871), when several letters appeared (*Western Daily News*) asserting that late baptisms were common in the west of England during the last century. One "E. C.," who held that baptism is no certain proof of age, urged that his own father was only baptised when four years of age, and that he knew a family of seven children, all of whom walked on the same day three miles to church to be christened. This would make the eldest quite 15 or 16, at least, for no child under six could have walked three miles to church. All endeavours to make E. Couch admit he was not 100 failed. He never deviated from his story in the least. However, nobody during the contest made him less than 96.

SALLY CLARK.

Aged 109. Died 1871.

Mr. Thomas Hughes of Chester furnished the first information of this case to *Notes and Queries*, (Jan. 25, 1868) :—

"There is now living at Hawarden in the county of Flint an old lady named Sally Clark, who claims to have been born at Caerwys in that county in the year 1762. She reckons her age (106) from the date of her marriage in 1790, at which time she declares she was 28 years old. She further declares that she walked with her parents to Caerwys Church on the day of her christening . . . The actual facts as ascertained by registers and other documents in my possession are as follows :—

"John Davis and Rose Roberts were married in the neighbourhood of Mold, Flintshire, and had a first-born daughter, Margaret, living

then they migrated to Caerwys in 1757, where several children were born to them. The following document was extracted by the Rev. W. Hughes, Rector of Caerwys :—

“Baptism solemnised in the parish of Caerwys in the county of Flint, in the year 1767: Sarah, daughter of John Davies and Rose his wife, baptized in March.’

“This was given Jan. 2, 1867. The baptisms of another daughter and son appear in 1769 and 1772. When about 12 Sarah went as a servant to Farmer Gibbons, Hawarden, and remained there ten years, when (1790) she was married at Hawarden Church to William Clark, a labourer. Hawarden then became her home. In 1844, her husband, to whom she had borne ten children, died. The eldest daughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Blundell, was living (aged 77) in 1868 at West Derby, near Liverpool. A daughter and a son were in Hawarden in that year (1868) when she lived in the son's cottage, where it was not uncommon to see the ancient dame, then almost blind, sitting in her arm-chair with one of her many great grand-children sitting on her knee.

“Mr. Hughes in that year, at the suggestion of Mrs. Gladstone, who always took great interest in her, had a photograph taken of the good woman. In this she is to be seen sitting at her cottage door, on the lintel of which, above her head, is nailed a horseshoe, the general harbinger of good luck all over the world. Mrs. Clark had, it has been said, ten children. From these sprang 30 grand-children and at least 32 great grand-children—the greater number at that date living.”

In 1868 Mrs. Clark had a nephew, her brother John's son, living, and

then upwards of 80—her brother having been born in 1758. Mr. Gladstone and the Bishop of Chester also investigated this case and held it to be clearly established. She died at Hawarden in 1871, and was there buried.

JOSHUA MILLER.

Aged 111. Died 1872.

“There is now living,” might have been read in *Notes and Queries* (July, 1871), “in the workhouse at Morpeth, Northumberland, a man aged 110, who, until very recently, might be seen walking about the town, and in possession of all his faculties. He is a native of Whickham, where his baptismal register has been sought and found. He was early in life seized by the press gang, and served for some time under Nelson in his own ship.

“There is a photograph of this old fellow, and a comely portrait it is. His name is Joshua Miller.”

Joshua would tell how he was born at Teams-on-the-Tyne. His father's name was Robert Miller, and his mother's Thomasina Coates. His father was a keelman, and lived to the age of 114 years. He, himself, worked as a keelman until he was pressed into the Royal Navy, at Shields, but in what year, or at what age, he could not remember. He was drafted into the war frigate “Pomona,” commanded at that time by Captain Lobb, who, he would say, “was the oldest captain in the navy.” The ship cruised principally off the coasts of France, Portugal, and Spain, during the five years he was on board her. He was not discharged, but left the service of his own accord. He would talk of an interview he had with Lord Nelson, at Portsmouth, and took credit for being the means of doing away with flogging

in the navy. This he firmly believed, albeit, it is generally supposed that a sailor or two have been flogged in the present reign.

He next turned up as working a "keel" upon the river Blyth. He was married twice. First, at Horton Church, but in what year or at what age he could not tell. Eight children were the issue of this marriage. His wife died, but he could not tell when, and he lived a widower for several years. He married his second wife at Bedlington, but in what year or at what age he could not remember. He had issue by the second marriage, one daughter who was 40 years of age in 1871. She was therefore born when her father was 70.

This daughter was married—a Mrs. Cockburn, who lived at Stockburn, and was (1871), the mother of nine children. She was a remarkably strong and powerful woman. She would tell how the earliest recollection of her father was that of an old man with a bald head and long white hair at the back of it, with which, as a little girl she used to play, and try to curl. He was uniformly healthy, and was a very large eater, particularly of animal food. He could neither read nor write, was not by any means an intelligent man, but full of foolish stories which did little more than raise a laugh. He had always been happy and contented, and cared for nothing but his food and tobacco. The latter he both chewed and smoked. He did not care for alcoholic liquors.

This daughter also informed the inquirer, Dr. R. Paton (Morpeth) that her mother had died at 63. She also added that an aunt or sister of her father's, died a few years previously at Gateshead, aged 108 years. This statement by his daughter Miller confirmed.

In January, 1871, *The North of England Advertiser* contained an interesting notice of this centenarian, whose claims, however, to the great age of 111 have been very clearly proved by Mr. Thoms to be greatly exaggerated. This paper was written by a gentleman signing himself "An Old Stager," and was entitled "Centenarianism in the North of England."

It in part ran as follows :—

"In some respects it is pleasant to know that after descanting upon the wonderful length of existence of those named, we have still in our midst, one who is hale and hearty, and who has reached the patriarchal age of 110 years—namely, Joshua Miller. This old man fought under the gallant Nelson, and like all old tars, his greatest glory is in repeating the deeds of the bold and the brave—how when the 'Pomona' frigate was once lying off Boulogne a live shell was thrown on deck which he fearlessly grasped and pitched overboard—how he narrowly escaped kingdom-come seventy or eighty years ago—how he laughed when his enemies went by the board—how that his father lived to the age of 119, his sister to 120, and that he hopes to do the same, with an endless variety of characteristic yarns which would lose their pungency by repetition.

"About twelve months ago he astonished the officers and captain of the gunboat 'Castor' by the agility with which he paced the deck, scanned the rigging, and dived into the cabins. It is affirmed that Joshua was born at Gateshead in 1761, and the record of his baptism is in the parish register at Whickham. If this statement is true we have another refutation of the assertion that no person can be proved to have lived 100 years.

"A couple of years since, Mr.

eo. Grey, kindly endeavoured to raise a subscription to keep the hearty old soul off the parish, or out of the poor-law union, but I believe the good intentions of Mr. Grey were not successful. At any rate, by a paragraph in the papers, I observe that Joshua Miller is an inmate of the Morpeth Workhouse, where he partook of a hearty meal on Christmas Day.

"This appears to be a lamentable conclusion to the old tar's career, and almost to imply that the old fellow has braved the battle and the freeze to small purpose. So far as convenient in such establishments, it is satisfactory to know that the veteran is well treated and comfortable—that his appetite and digestive organs are in full trim—and that not one of those houseless wanderers enjoyed his dinner with greater zest than Joshua Miller. If life is worth having, and even small pleasures only now and then shed their radiance, may it be many a long year before they 'rattle his bones over the stones.'"

Nevertheless, he died in 1872 (April), for we find the following notice of his decease in *The Newcastle Daily Journal* (April 25):—

"There died yesterday in the Union Workhouse, Morpeth, an inmate, Joshua Miller, said to be 111 years of age." After giving some particulars already set out here, the writer continued: "Latterly he was employed at Bedlington Iron Works in conveying the manufactured goods down the river to the Port of Blyth. He became an inmate of the workhouse about two years ago, and was able to move about till within a week ago . . . His departure from this life was announced to the town by a muffled peal."

The same writer, in afterwards publishing his discovery that Miller

was by no means so old as he had given himself out to be, said, "In his sphere as a pauper the old man received deference from all, and was placed in the van of his *confrères*." The writer admitted that Mr. G. Grey, assistant-overseer for the parish of All Saints, had proved that Miller largely overstated his age. Mr. Grey himself acquitted the veteran of any wish to deceive his patrons; he really believed he was as old as the first of two registers which were confounded made him appear. But there can be no question that Miller was a very wonderful man for his years, remarkably fresh.

His severest opponent gave him over ninety years, and within a year of that age he had worked a cargo boat up and down a tidal river. He certainly should have been saved from the fall of entering a workhouse. Strange that all his grandchildren combined could not find bread enough for their aged ancestor.

MRS. LAWRENCE.

Aged 104½. Died 1862.

In *Notes and Queries*, (March 1, 1868) may be found the following:—

"By the courtesy of Major-General Lawrence, of Sydney Place, Bath, I am enabled to offer you a well attested case of centenarianism. General Lawrence's mother, Mrs. Martha Lawrence, daughter of John Cripps, Esq., of Upton House, Tetbury, was born on August 9, 1758, in Bow Lane, Cheapside, and christened at St. St. Mary's, Aldermary. She died on the morning of February 16, 1862 . . . She expired without a struggle, in full possession of her faculties. General Lawrence informs me that

on a fly-leaf of an old family Bible in his possession is the following entry :—

“John Lawrence and Martha Cripps were married Nov. 12, 1782, at Streatham.

Her son, General Lawrence, informed Mr. Thoms that his mother had four sisters. Mr. Thoms gives the general credit for courtesy in furnishing this information, but he himself thought fit (though he found the lady's baptismal entry,) to mistrust it. He admitted, however (“Longevity of Man,” p. 268), that “a lady who died nearly eighty years after her marriage must, at all events, have been nearly a centenarian.” This gentleman does not appear to have doubted the lady's marriage—which is something of a consolation.

MATTHEW BADEN.

Aged 106. Died 1869.

There may be read in *The Times* (May 13, 1869) the following narrative :—

“There died on Tuesday morning (May 11th, 1869) at Oare, in the parish of Wilcot, Wilts, Matthew Baden, at the age of 106½ years, having been born at Pewsey in the month of February, 1763. He has left a numerous offspring of children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren. His eldest daughter now living is verging on eighty, and her children and grandchildren are many. Matthew Baden did not marry till he was nearly thirty years of age. Till latterly he cultivated a few acres of garden land, and he died respected in his own little freehold cottage at Oare, after a confinement to his bed of four days only.”

MRS. PUCKLE.

Aged 106. Died 1872.

In *The Times* (December 13, 1872), may be found the following :—“There has just died at High Wych, Sawbridgeworth, Herts, on the 9th December, Mrs. Elizabeth Puckle, *née* Elizabeth Smith, in her 106th year. She was baptised at Eastwick, Herts, near Harlow, Essex, on the 13th of September, 1767. She was bedridden, but otherwise in full possession of all her faculties till within ten days of her death, being able to read a verse of a chapter in Isaiah, without spectacles and without prompting. She was remarkable for her cheerful demeanour, plump healthy appearance, and lively recollection of bygone facts and occurrences. She always asserted that she remembered walking to church in pattens to be baptised, which would seem to add at least two years to her recorded age.”

Previously in *The Times*, (October, 1871), there had been published a notice of the existence of this centenarian.

“About a mile and a half from High Wych, there is now living an old lady named Elizabeth Puckle. In early life she was in service, and she has always been remarkable for her good temper. She is now living in a thatched cottage, with clay walls and a floor of bricks. Her bed is near the outer door of the cottage, and this is generally open in fine weather. Her memory is excellent, but her annals are short and simple, generally relating to her neighbours and friends. It is quite refreshing to see this old lady, so different from most persons of extreme old age—her smile so bright, and her chat about the grandfathers of septuagenarians so lively. She is supported by her

children and grandchildren and lives in comfort. In her younger days Mrs. Puckle filled the situation of nursemaid in the family of the grandfather of the present Mr. Rivers, of Sawbridgeworth Nurseries—who is 74 years of age.

MRS. CATHERINE DUNCOMBE SHAFTO.

Aged 101. Died 1872.

Another of the cases which Mr. Thoms conceded to be utterly true. There could be no question upon the point. Mrs. Shafto came from a county family and married into another. Her birth, her life, her death, were all practically public. She was born in Auckland, and is therefore one of the most northern of centenarians. The lady's baptismal entry runs thus:—"Feb. 1. 1771, Catherine, daughter of Sir John and Lady Dorothy Eden, of Windleston."

She was married in 1803 to Mr. Robert Eden Duncombe Shafto, of Whitworth, co. Durham, where she lived the remainder of her life. Sir Alexander Spearman quite demonstrated this lady's age, apart from baptismal entry, by showing that in October 1790, she then being 19, was selected as one of the government nominees in the tonnage of that year. She had five sons and one daughter. Of the sons all became public men; one of them Robert Duncombe Shafto being for many years a prominent member of the House of Commons.

Mrs. Shafto not only possessed a sound constitution but a very vigorous intellect. She was fond of company, singularly hospitable, and exceptionally charitable. On the day when she completed her 100 years she sat down not only at

the marriage breakfast of a granddaughter, but also at the dinner which followed in the evening. Throughout her life she had delightful health, and maintained her senses and the use of her intellect to the very last. Cheerful as she was, however, she desired to die. Even on the morning of her death her intellect was quite clear, and she expressed a cheerful belief to her medical attendant that her death was very rapidly approaching.

WILLIAM WEBB.

Aged 105.

The Rock (Feb. 3, 1871) reported this case. The statement ran:—

"There is now living at Frome, in Somersetshire, a man who has survived a hundred and five winters, and who is healthy and capable of telling his own history. He was born, as he himself states, at Frome, on Christmas Day, or Christmas Eve, 106 years ago.

"In his early days he learnt the trade of a shearman (a branch of cloth manufacturing), but when about 25 years of age he enlisted into the marines, and served eight years, being present in some of Lord Nelson's memorable engagements. After he had obtained his discharge he returned to Frome, married, and worked as a labourer until old age prevented his continuing to do so. He now rises about nine in the morning, and retires about nine at night. His memory is very good, and his hair not so white as that of many men at sixty years of age.

"A few days ago he was a party to and executed a deed of conveyance relating to some little property in which he had an interest, and he perfectly understood the nature of the document presented for his sig-

nature. Three years ago this old man, W. Webb, was in the habit of cultivating his own garden, and was then seen bringing a faggot from this garden to his house (a distance of sixty or seventy yards) upon his shoulders, the weight being little less than fifty pounds, and of a most unwieldy size.

"Altogether Webb is a most remarkable man, and the facts being well authenticated by collateral evidence he is an object of much interest. He attends regularly at Christ Church, preferring the service there to the elaborate ceremonies of the parish church."

MRS. JOHN PESSENGER.

Aged 101. Died 1875.

The Pessenger family was a noted family of New York butchers. They were butchers for several generations, almost up to the present time.

One of the girls of this Pessinger family, the belle of the Bowery, married Henry Astor, the jolly rich butcher, the brother of John Jacob Astor.

The first old original Pessenger was quite a noted character in old New York. He was a friend, as well as the favourite butcher, of Washington, who got all his meats of him when in New York.

Pessenger was at first, what his grandsons were after him, army contractor. He took a contract to keep a part of the Continental army in meat, and he kept his contract fairly and squarely. Washington heard of the splendid way he fed his portion of his army, sent for him complimented him, and became from that time the friend as well as the employer of the "boss" butcher.

Afterwards, when Washington got to be President and lived in

what is now Franklin Square, but was then Cherry Street, he arranged with Pessenger to send him all his meats. One day, calling at the President's house to have his little, or rather his big bill, settled by the President's secretary, Tobias Lear, the butcher, saw a pretty young woman bustling around, and casting sheep's eyes on her and inquiring about her, found that she was a waiting maid upon the President's lady. Her name was Maria Henigar, daughter of old Christopher Henigar, and she was a very handsome and healthy girl with a deal of sense.

She had had notions before this of being courted by some army officer and all that, but as an army officer did not come her way, and an army contractor did, in the shape of butcher John Pessenger, why, she, like the sensible creature she was, rejected the ideal soldier for the real butcher. After all, they both were "killing."

When, in course of time, the President and his wife moved to Philadelphia, the lady wanted Miss Maria to go with her. But Miss Maria would not go. She had better things to do than to follow another woman about. She was offered a husband and a house of her own, and she jumped at the offer and the offerer. In vain Washington's wife begged, in vain even President Washington argued with his wife's favorite; he could not persuade her to go to Philadelphia. In this case, the butcher had more influence than the president, and Miss Maria Henigar, remaining in New York, became Mrs. John Pessenger, and she stayed Mrs. John Pessenger for a good many years, over seventy-five in all, fifty of which she was a widow.

This remarkable woman lived to

be 101 years old. She saw and remembered seeing the three great wars of N. America. She was a young child on the breaking out of the Revolution; she was a married woman in the war of 1812, and she was an old widow, but a well preserved old widow, when Abraham Lincoln was killed. That was a mother to be proud of, and her two sons, butchers, were very proud of her.

GRANDMOTHER NUGEN.

Aged 100. Died 1877.

There may be read in *The Kingstown (Indiana) Journal*:—

"Grandmother Nugen died March 21st, 1877, at the residence of her son, George Nugen, in Lewisville, Indiana. She had almost completed her 100th year. She leaves surviving her 12 children, 66 grandchildren, 100 great-grandchildren, and 2 great-great-grandchildren, a total of 180."

TWENTY-SIX AMERICAN CENTENARIANS.

(1878.)

During 1878 no less than twenty-six centenarians died in the United States whose aggregate age was 2,692 years. The oldest among them—though his claims were stoutly disputed—was Captain Lahrbush, who died in April, in New York, at the age of 111. Fifteen of the twenty-six were women, and of the eleven males one was colored.

THE FOUR PICARD CENTENARIANS.

Augustus Picard, aged 109.
Died 1878.

His father, aged 108.

His mother, aged 104.

His twin sister (in 1878) 109—still living (1878) in Quebec.

Augustus Picard, died at Rochester (N.Y.), at the age of 109. His father is said to have lived to the age of 108 and his mother to 104, while a sister, 109 years old, is still living in Quebec. Picard was an inveterate smoker, and scarcely ill for a day in his life.

HENRY RUSSELL.

Aged 104. Died June 1880.

"(To the Editor of the *Daily News*.)—Sir, — On Friday last Henry Russell, an inmate of this institution, died at the advanced age of 104 years. The deceased had been an inmate of the asylum for about 20 years, and always enjoyed good health; he was in full possession of all his faculties to within a few days of his death.—Yours faithfully, John Levy, Secretary.—Hand-in-Hand Asylum, 23, Wells Street, Hackney."

SARAH WHITE.

Aged 106. Died 1881.

"In spite of the protests of Mr. Thoms the habit of centenarianism seems to be increasing in these islands. A few days ago some one died who had 'got into his century,' as cricketers say, and it was vain for Mr. Thoms to cavil, for the rector of Lincoln testified to the truth of the story. Reckless credulity is the last intellectual vice with which anyone would charge the Rector of Lincoln; and so we presume that his centenarian has 'passed to where beyond these voices'—the criticisms of Mr. Thoms—'there is peace.' No sooner has this shock been administered to the sceptic who has reduced the scores of so many reputed centenarians than two more aged people depart this life. One

Sarah White has expired near Birmingham at the advanced age of 106, leaving an orphan of eighty years."—*Daily News*.

In this case the daughter aged 80, who had always lived with her mother even satisfied Mr. Thoms, who did not make the faintest attempt to disprove the allegations. Indeed the second edition of his book "Longevity of Man" (1879) appears to have been accepted as a challenge, and from its date to the present the proofs of centenarianism have been overwhelming.

MR ARCHIBALD MAC ARTHUR.

Aged 104. Died 1881.

"The oldest man in Scotland has for ever deserted the healthy neighbourhood of Dunoon. Mr. Archibald MacArthur is said to have been 'the oldest inhabitant' of Scotland, though it does not seem that he 'never remembered anything,' which Sam Weller mentions as a characteristic of oldest inhabitants in general. On the contrary, Mr. MacArthur retained his mental faculties to the last. He was not so old as Sarah White, (*see*) having been born in 1777. Thus our generation can match in longevity with any in human history since the date of Moses, unless we except the generations that saw Lady Desmond and the celebrated Jenkins.

"Mr. MacArthur probably remembered a good many historical changes. He was a lad of 16 or 17 during the Reign of Terror, which has taken the place of the Forty-Five as the Ultima Thule of human recollection. He was drawing towards 40 when 'grizzling hair the brain doth clear' at the time of the battle of Waterloo. He was so

old that he had probably become a Conservative at the date of the first Reform Bill, and must have been perfectly antiquated when the Corn Laws were repealed. Yet he went on living; he 'saw in' four kings, three republics, and two Emperors in France; he saw Italy a mere geographical expression, cut up for the benefit of a dozen princes and priests, emperors and kings, and he lived to behold her one and united.

"After he reached fourscore years he saw the war between Prussia and Austria, the rise of Prussia, and the collapse of the Empire in France. In his time Europe was mapped out half-a-dozen times, and the balance of power in the English Constitution was shifted again and again.

"Mr. MacArthur remembered 'ninety-eight' and 'forty-eight,' and he lived to see the Irish Land Bill passed. He was born in times when about three weeks were consumed in the journey between Edinburgh and London, and he lived to see it become a 'promenade' which may be accomplished between breakfast and dinner. In his lifetime the whole system of military armament was almost as much altered by the change from flint to percussion cap, and from muzzle to breech-loading rifles, as by the change from bows and arrows to match-locks and wheel-locks.

"Electricity and steam have altered the intellectual conditions prevalent at the end of his career from those in which he was born nearly as much as the invention of the printing press altered them four hundred years ago. He was born before that event at Yorktown which lost us a continent, and he lived to see the English flag saluted by the great-grandchildren of the

men who were his father's contemporaries. Since Henry Jenkins, in the reign of Charles II., remembered the carrying of arrow-heads by the English forces at Flodden field, very few men have watched so many vicissitudes, such changes in the character of what, after all, is essentially so changeless—the life of the race.”—(*Daily News*, 1881.)

MRS. ANN RITCHIE.

Aged 100. Died November 1882.

Mrs. Ann Ritchie, who was born on May 15, 1782, died in November 1882 near Dumfermline. She preserved her faculties to the last. Her great-grandchildren numbered fifty.

JANE HOOPER.

Aged 102. Died 1882.

Jane Hooper died in this year in the St. Pancras Almshouses, at Haverstock-hill, London, at the age of 102 years.

SANTIAGO ORTIZ.

Aged 113. Died 1882.

Santiago Ortiz, of Ysleta, Tex., perhaps the oldest man in the United States, was called to his eternal home in this year. The *El Paso Times* says: “He was called the ‘Tabisman,’ and his death is worthy of more than a passing notice. He was thought to be 113 years old, and up to the time of his death was remarkably strong and active. As an evidence of his sprightliness and vigour, it is told of him that on one occasion last year he desired to cross the river. For fear his ‘burro’ might not be equal to the task of swimming the river and bearing him as a burden on its back, the old gentleman

boldly plunged into the stream, and holding on to the halter-rope, led his ‘burro,’ which followed in his wake, and thus both of them swam the river, each ‘on his own hook.’

“Don Santiago Ortiz was a guide for the King of Spain prior to 1780, and before Mexico had gained her independence and shaken off Spanish rule. He was familiar with the country from the Mississippi River to the city of Mexico, and was well known by all Americans who have lived on the frontier for the previous fifty years. He was one of the original Pueblo Indians, and left only one son to mourn his death.

“The old gentleman was a devout Catholic, and a few days before his death he visited the priest at his residence, and told him that he felt his end was near at hand. He wished to make his peace with Heaven and die. He received the sacraments, died, and was buried according to the rites of the church.”

In regard to this death another authority writing from Ysleta, said:—

“Don Santiago Ortiz, more familiarly known as Taosino, was a member of the Taos tribe of Indians of Mexico, which tribe is now nearly extinct, and Taosino was undoubtedly the last of the tribe north of the Rio Grande. The aged don up to the last retained most wonderful powers of memory, and, having been a great traveller in his day, saw and retained most vivid recollections of many of the celebrities of the last century, among whom were President Washington, Commodore Perry, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, and many others whom he had seen in Washington and other Eastern cities during a trip on which he was acting as body-servant to a Mexican officer.

“Taosino was possessed of great

strength and agility, and even after he had passed the centennial milestone would often amuse his friends by exhibitions most astonishing for one of his years. The Hon. Judge Jose Baca, upon learning of his death, with that spirit of liberality for which he was so justly celebrated, started a subscription list to raise a fund to give all that was mortal of Don Santiago Ortiz honourable burial."

MADAME LACENE.

Aged 104. Died December 1882.

This case of centenarianism is beyond all question. The lady belonged to history, her name to French society—her "papers," always strictly preserved and required in France, are quite beyond question.

Madame Lacène, was sister-in-law of M. Camille Jordan, and aged 104. She had formerly a much-frequented salon at Lyons, where she received Madame de Stael, Madame Recamier, and many of the most brilliant celebrities of the restoration.

SUSAN DURELL (Negress).

Aged 106. Died 1883.

Susan Durell, an aged coloured woman, died at 17, Chauncey Street, Brooklyn, and was buried in Cypress Hill Cemetery. Dr. Randolph's report to the Health Department (New York) gave her age as 106 years.

MRS. ELLEN BIRMINGHAM.

Aged 107. Died 1883.

Mrs. Ellen Birmingham, who died at Louisville, Kentucky, in this year, is said to have been 107 years, 2 months and 14 days old.

THE STORNOWAY CENTENARIAN.

Aged over 100. Died 1883.

"A cottage in the Hebrides is by no means a cottage *ornée* . . . There is no chimney and but one door, and the floor is the bare earth with a bench for the family formed of earth or peat and stone. Beds and bedding are unknown. If the family keeps a cow, that has the best corner, for it is what the pig is to the Irishman, 'the gentleman that pays the rent.' Small sheep may be met with, but never pigs. Pork seems an abomination in the eyes of the natives . . . Fish and porridge seem their principal diet, and it agrees with them. The girls are wonderfully fat and healthy, and consumption is utterly unknown. While I was at Stornoway an old woman had just died in the workhouse, considerably over a century old. She had never left the place for one day."—"Christopher Crayon in Scotland," 1884.

DAVID MITCHELL.

Aged 104. Died 8th Sept., 1883.

David Mitchell had just completed his 104th year, when he died in Lanchester (Durham) Workhouse. He had been ill for some time, but was hale and hearty up to a few months ago. Mitchell was born at Fettercairn, a small village at the base of the Grampian Hills. When eighteen years old he was apprenticed as a seaman, and followed that vocation until 1840. He was captured by a French privateer, and was confined as prisoner at Valenciennes along with the late Lord Barrington, Sir Thomas Clavering, and others.

Mitchell married, and had a son born at Sunderland, of whose where-

about he knew nothing. During a long period he was an inmate of Manchester Workhouse. He was sociable and cheerful, and retained to the last the full possession of his faculties. He partook of ordinary fare, was abstemious in his habits, and enjoyed better health during the latter portion of his life than he did fifty years ago.

MR. HENRY OXENFORD.

Aged 100. Died December, 1803.

"Mr. Henry Oxenford died at the advanced age of 100. He was the uncle of the late Mr. John Oxenford, the well-known dramatic critic of *The Times*, and like his nephew, is said to have been a man of remarkable talents. At the beginning of the century he was appointed to a clerkship in the Custom House, from which some sixty years ago he retired. All kinds of diversions are open to the old man of leisure and ability who has preserved his faculties in full vigour; and at the somewhat critical period of three score and ten it occurred to Mr. Oxenford to take up German.

"Cato is said to have learned Greek at eighty; a fact, more or less perfectly established, on which Longfellow lays stress in his poem on the consolations, if not advantages, of old age. It is certain, however, that Mr. Henry Oxenford attacked the difficult German language when he had already reached the traditional limit of human life. He had still thirty years before him, and did well to open to himself a new field of study."—*Truth*.

MRS. NANCY REMSEN.

Aged 113. Died 1883.

Mrs. Nancy Remsen died in this year at the residence of her granddaughter, No. 261, West Forty-

seventh Street, New York. She was a little over 113 years of age. Mrs. Remsen was born in Monmouth County, New Jersey, her father being a negro and her mother a white woman. Her name before marriage was Clay, and she was supposed to be a distant relative to the distinguished statesman, Henry Clay. When quite a young woman, being almost without a sign of Ethiopian blood in her veins, and while employed as a seamstress in a private family, she was wooed and wed by a soldier in the British army. Mrs. Remsen had five children, but all except one preceded her to the grave.

About the year 1870 the old lady lost her first sight. From this time she remained blind until one day, four years after, while sitting meditatively at a window, she was surprised to discover that she could see as well as ever.

Physicians and scientists at the time were exercised over the occurrence. Mrs. Remsen had never been ill but once up to within the hour of her death, and that was during the cholera scourge in America half a century before. The only ailment of any nature otherwise she had suffered from since was that of a sprain in the right leg, which was caused while taking a short cut over a fence with her daughter during a thunderstorm. When not busy reading or knitting, the old lady often occupied the time of her daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren in telling them interesting reminiscences of the American Revolution. She could describe personally Washington, Lafayette, Burgoyne and others of equal prominence, and every prominent battle and movement during the revolution.

The old lady's second sight remained until some few years ago,

when one morning she found it gone for ever. About seven weeks before her death Mrs. Remsen began to complain of pain in her right leg, the one which had been sprained. Then she evinced feebleness in her condition, and as it was feared the end of the old lady's life was approaching, Dr. T. H. Wilcox was called in to relieve her pain as much as possible. On the day of her death, after being allowed to sit up awhile, she was put back into bed, and there, after conversing for awhile sensibly with her daughter, passed away as peacefully as if she had dropped off into quiet repose.

The granddaughter of Mrs. Remsen, in speaking of the old lady, said: "There never was angry words where Granny Nancy was. She was always pleasant and mirthful." The granddaughter had a portrait of Mrs. Remsen, taken when just 106 years old. It showed an old lady with a pleasing countenance, expressive of good nature and contentment. The daughter is now in her seventieth year, and the grandchildren of the centenarian are all above thirty.

MISS CARNEGIE.

Aged 100. Died 1884.

Miss Carnegie, of Leamington, a lady well known for her philanthropy, died on Thursday. She was 100 years old on May 26, and up to within a week of her death had possession of all her faculties.

MR. T. BROUGH.

Aged 100. Died September, 1884.

Mr. T. Brough, a farmer, died at Seaham-park, Seaham Harbour, aged 100 years. He was born in the year 1784. For the last thirteen years of his life he had been bed-ridden. Within twelve months of his death his memory was good, and he could talk of events which

came under his observation during the closing years of the last century. He saw Lord Byron's marriage, and knew Lady Byron intimately when living with her father, Sir Ralph Milbanke, at Seaham Hall.

MISS RHODA DUNN.

Aged 104. Died 1884.

Miss Rhoda Dunn, of Hunstanton, died in her 104th year. She was born at Beeston-next-Mileham, Swaffham, Norfolk, on February 23, 1871. Shortly after her last birthday the Queen presented Miss Dunn with her portrait, upon the receipt of a photograph of the centenarian, sent by the vicar, the Rev. A. Waller. She enjoyed good health until within a few weeks of her death, and could see fairly well, but she was quite deaf.

A DESTINED CENTENARIAN. (1884).

There was something strangely pathetic in the brief dispatch that spread from Tennessee (April 12, 1884), announcing that an old man of 98 had committed suicide by hanging himself with a twisted grapevine. It was pitiful that a life which had almost rounded a century, should close in such darkness of despair. No doubt the sole survivor of his kin, he had found his "strength but heaviness and sorrow," and had not the heart to wait for the last tattoo.

MRS. SARAH DAISY BURROUGHS.

Aged 105. Died N. York, 1884.

In this year Mrs. Sarah Daisy Burroughs died at the residence of her daughters on West Thirty-second street, New York, in her

5th year. Mrs. Burroughs is a daughter of John Daisy, an old revolutionist, and was born in the house of her grandfather, General Philip Schuyler, in the year 1779. Mrs. Burroughs witnessed the English evacuate New York, and attended the services in memory of George Washington in 1799 at old St. Paul's Church. In 1814 she became the wife of John Nicholas Oakley Burroughs, a captain in the American army and representative of the Burroughs families of New Jersey, also becoming, through this marriage, a relative of General Alexander Hamilton. At the close of the revolution John Burroughs became a shipbuilder. In 1847 he died, leaving Mrs. Burroughs a widow with four children, one son and three daughters.

At the time of Captain Burroughs's demise, Mrs. Burroughs had possession of some valuable property in the South, given to her through her father, who died during her wedded life. To secure the settlement of this estate the lady placed all the documents in the hands of Aaron Burr, who was a leading member of the bar at the time, and well-known to the different members of the Schuyler and Burroughs families. Mrs. Burroughs claimed that Aaron Burr made no report or settlement of the estate placed in his hands, and from that day to this neither Mrs. Burroughs nor her children have been able to secure the possession of their rightful property.

In 1870, through the Act of Congress pensioning widows of all veterans of the war of 1812, Mrs. Burroughs, with help from her family was enabled during her declining years to live in comfortable circumstances. The deceased lady never wore eyeglasses, and in her

one hundredth year was able to sew and patch a fancy quilt. She had no regular hours for retiring, and never allowed darkness to interrupt any work she was engaged in. Mrs. Burroughs always enjoyed a good appetite, and was in the habit of eating without regard to regular hours. Up to within five years ago the centenarian never needed the services of a physician. After a slight hæmorrhage of the lungs she again resumed her usual vigor and remained in excellent health until within a year of her death when in her 104th year, the effects of age began to show. Then her sight became slightly impaired and her memory perceptibly defective. Two weeks only before her death the venerable lady became childish and showed symptoms of failing health. Dr. J. C. Morton was sent for, but his skill was unavailing, the revered lady quietly breathing her last.

The centenarian's daughters, the youngest of whom was sixty years of age at the time of their mother's death were very communicative. In speaking of her mother one of them said: "Mother has always lamented chiefly the action of Aaron Burr in defrauding her out of her papers and property. Even up to a few weeks ago she said if it was not for the badness of that man Burr to-day she might have been in better circumstances. She used to tell us all about old New York. She used to promenade at Hanover Square when that was a leading quarter of the city. Then she could tell how the old fort at the Battery was taken down and the lumber divided among the poor of the city. She was at General Washington's funeral. She used to tell of the thirteen maidens all in white who attended the funeral, and also how the girls and women

went about with water pails and bottles helping the thirsty troops in the ceremonies to drink. The duel between Burr and Hamilton she remembered well.

"We have her pension papers, showing where her husband, our father, fought in the war of 1812 and died a captain, but to the end she would never have him called anything but a private. We have been told to seek our claim to the property of which Burr held the title and papers from my mother, but the trouble and money it must take have always kept us from any action. Mother has never had any particular habits besides leading a good Christian life. Up to about two years ago her memory was as good as ever. On Evacuation Day last Mr. John Drohn intended to take her out in a buggy to ride in the procession, and she said she would like to go too, but of course her desire could not be complied with, as she might have died in the carriage. On New Year's Day nearly all the boys and young men in the neighbourhood who learned of mother's age came in here and wished her a happy new year. Mother was buried on the same day she had been married. We are here alone, but I hope we shall get along as happily as mother, whose life seemed to go out just like the light of a burnt out candle did."

Here a bright-faced youth entered the room, the lady remarking as the lad sat down, "There is one of the fourth generation of the Burroughs, and I hope there will be more."

MARGARET MARGARET.

Aged 109. Died January 1884.

Margaret Margaret died at Tallysin village, on the borders of Car-

diganshire, in her 109th year. Notwithstanding her remarkable age, the poor old woman, who had been in receipt of parish relief for a great many years, was at her death in possession of all her faculties excepting her sight, and retained a vivid recollection of events of seventy or eighty years ago.

THOMAS CURTIS.

Aged 100. Died April, 1885.

There died in April at Castle Acre, Norfolk, a man named Thomas Curtis, who completed his 100th year in October, 1884. His family consisted of 10 children, 46 grandchildren, 59 great-grandchildren, and 6 great-great-grandchildren. The deceased was born in Castle Acre, and lived there all his life. He never travelled more than thirty miles from home, and was only once in a railway train. He was always an early riser, worked and lived very hard, and up to last year cultivated his own garden. When ninety years of age his wages were 1s. a day.

In relation to this recent case the Rev. D. Collyer, vicar of Castle Acre, was good enough to write as follows:—

"I delayed answering your letter through the difficulty of finding out exactly what you required. Thomas Curtis was a carpenter, and for the last ten years of his life, during which I knew him, was so extremely deaf that it was very difficult to learn his opinions or feelings on any subject. Consequently I am unable to inform you as to how far the sense of sacrifice was developed in him. He was glad of religious conversation, &c., as far as I was from time to time able to impart it and always appeared a contented sort of man. On consulting the older members of the community

who knew him from earlier days, I have been unanimously informed that he was of a lively temperament, 'fond of his joke,' always remarkably quick-tempered and passionate, but apparently good-hearted.

"You may imagine that a working carpenter in a village during the closing years of life has no great opportunities of being otherwise than temperate when his existence depends on an allowance from the parish. But I am credibly informed that he was never a 'drinking man,' though by no means a total abstainer. I have not been able to ascertain more about him, except that at one period he had some cottage property; but how he lost it no one seems to know."

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE.

Aged 100. Died July 28, 1885.

Sir Moses Montefiore was the eldest son of Joseph Elias Montefiore, a descendant of an Italian family which settled in England in the last century, and had attained a respectable though not a foremost position in London as merchants. He was born on the 24th October, 1784, while his mother was on a visit to Florence. He received an English commercial education, and was early admitted a member of the Stock Exchange. He married, in 1812, Judith, daughter of Levy Barent Cohen, whose sister became the wife of Nathan Meyer de Rothschild, founder of the house, and to this alliance it was partly due that Moses Montefiore was able to retire early from business with an ample fortune. In 1812 he became *Gabay*, or Treasurer of the Portuguese Synagogue, and in 1828 he was elected a member of the Board of Jewish Deputies, the presidency of which board he held from 1835 to 1875. He was Sheriff of London

in 1837, and received the honour of knighthood on the occasion of the Queen's visit to the City after her accession.

In the same year he made his first important visit to the Holy Land, though he had previously been there in 1827. In all he paid seven visits to Palestine between this earlier one and his last, in the 89th year of his age. The country in 1837 was suffering from a visitation of the plague, and the philanthropic mission had to encamp on the Mount of Olives.

His next mission (in 1840) was on behalf of the Jews of Damascus, who were the subject of barbarous persecution, excited by the French consul on the astounding pretext that they had murdered a French priest in order to mingle his blood with their sacrifice. Sir Moses Montefiore obtained from Mehemet Ali a promise of protection for the Jews in future, and on proceeding to Constantinople he obtained from the Sultan, through Reschid Pacha, the Hatti Homayon, which has been styled the Magna Charta of the race in Turkey, granting full equality of religious rights and permission to hold land. This latter privilege was doubly important, because it was evident to Sir Moses Montefiore that the regeneration of the Jews depended on their being induced to follow agricultural and other industries, instead of devoting themselves exclusively to retail trade. His services were duly acknowledged on his return. He was privileged to bear arms, and adopted as his motto "Think and thank," with the inscription "Jerusalem" on a banner borne by a lion.

In 1845 he was Sheriff of Kent, and in the following year he received, on the recommendation of Sir Robert Peel, the honour of a baronetcy. This, we may assume,

was in recognition of a service to humanity which Sir Moses Montefiore had just performed. The Emperor Nicholas, of Russia, had revived several old edicts and issued new ones against the Jews, which rendered their position absolutely intolerable. Sir Moses Montefiore, accompanied by Lady Montefiore, and Dr. Leowe, proceeded to St. Petersburg, and had an interview with the Emperor. Though no formal concession was made, the obnoxious decrees were first suspended, and then allowed to fall into disuse. On the suggestion of the Emperor, Sir Moses Montefiore made a tour throughout the large towns chiefly inhabited by Jews, and induced several thousand families to devote themselves to agriculture, affording them the means of doing so.

In 1854, the distress of the Jews in Palestine called forth an appeal from the Chief Rabbi, and Sir Moses again went to Jerusalem to superintend the distribution not only of the funds subscribed in England, but of a bequest of £10,000 by an American Jew, Judah Touro. A portion of land near the Jaffa shore was purchased for agricultural operations; twenty almshouses for the needy were founded, and loan and building societies established. A cotton factory and a windmill were also erected, and various benevolent institutions were set on foot.

Dr. Neumann, in his work on the Holy City (1877), states that the success of these undertakings was but partial, the factory in particular having failed through the inexperience of the native managers appointed. But Sir Moses himself, visiting the scene twenty years after this commencement, appears not to have been dissatisfied with the total result.

The next important matter in which we find Sir Moses Montefiore engaged on behalf of his co-religionists is in the case of the abduction of the Jewish child, Mortara, in 1858. He proceeded to Rome, but his intercession with Cardinal Antonelli was a failure, and he was not even admitted to an audience of the Pope. In 1862 Lady Montefiore died leaving no children, and Sir Moses founded in memory of her, an institution at Ramsgate devoted entirely to the study of Hebrew. He paid another visit to Constantinople in the following year to obtain the confirmation of the edict of the late Sultan allowing him to possess land.

In 1863 his services were again called for by the persecution of Jews in Morocco. Although verging on his eightieth year, he sought interviews with Napoleon III. and Isabella II. and, fortified with due authority, he next proceeded to Tangier in a French frigate, and secured the release of those of his fellow-countrymen who had not succumbed to the horrible tortures inflicted on the most transparent pretexts. Then, in an English man-of-war, he sailed to Mogador, and made the long inland journey to Morocco, where the Sultan conceded a promise of full protection to Jews in the future. In 1866 again he made a journey to Bucharest to intercede with prince Charles of Roumania on behalf of the Jews of that Principality, but with no marked results.

His last journey to Jerusalem was made in 1875, and a record of it, printed for private circulation, gives details of the results of so many years' labour. On his return he was received with an enthusiasm seldom paralleled, not only by his co-religionists, but by the influential and benevolent classes every-

where. A testimonial fund of £10,000 was raised, and, according to his known wish, no portion of it was to be given in alms, but the bulk was invested in the purchase of land and houses in Palestine, in establishing a loan fund, and in aiding the able-bodied inhabitants to engage in agricultural and trading pursuits. Some regretted that, according to the terms of the appeal made to the public, no part of this fund could be devoted to the secular education of Jews in Palestine.

The closing years of this long and beneficent life were spent at East Cliff, Ramsgate, once the residence of the Duchess of Kent, and now her present Majesty. Residents, and even casual visitors to that town, do not need to be told how much his munificence, stimulated by the memory of his deceased wife, has accomplished for the benefit of the community. Sir Moses was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and received from the Sultan the distinction of the Order of the Medjidie.

When Sir Moses Montefiore attained his hundredth birthday (8th November, 1884), the rejoicings amongst the Hebrews were tremendous.

A special service was held in the Synagogue at Ramsgate and the building was crowded. Dr. Hermann Adler, Delegate Chief Rabbi, took part in the service and read the special prayer having reference to Sir Moses. Dr. Adler afterwards proceeded to East Cliff Lodge, and in the presence of Sir Moses, again read the official prayer, first in Hebrew and afterwards in English. The venerable baronet insisted upon standing the whole time. After prayers had been read, Sir Moses, still standing, said, in a very strong voice: "I cannot tell the thousandth, nor the ten-thousandth,

part of what I feel to-day, when by the blessing of the Almighty I have arrived at so full an age. I thank Him for His merciful providence, and I thank all my friends for their great kindness." Addressing Dr. Adler, he said: "You have the happiness of seeing my excellent friend your father the Reverend Chief Rabbi alive. Follow in his footsteps; and may God bless you all."

Sir Moses then received a number of his most intimate friends. He was in the most excellent spirits; but, by the advice of his medical attendant, Mr. Woodman, all unnecessary excitement was scrupulously avoided. Sir Moses received during the day over eight hundred letters and six hundred telegrams of congratulation, in all languages and from all parts of the world, in addition to many other tokens of regard and esteem in the shape of beautifully illuminated addresses and choice bouquets of flowers.

Sir Moses Montefiore being an old Freemason, the Jewish Freemasons of London celebrated the attainment of the 100th year of his age by a festivity.

At Moscow, the 100th birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore was celebrated by a special service held in the chief Jewish Synagogue. The Jewish clerks and students in the city forwarded congratulatory addresses. At St. Petersburg special services were held in the Jewish synagogues in that city, as well as in those in the provinces, in celebration of the 100th birthday of Sir Moses Montefiore; while from New York came the news: "The centenary of Sir Moses Montefiore is being celebrated throughout the United States."

All Ramsgate rejoiced. Triumphant arches appeared here and

there, and an immense quantity of bunting fronted the houses and overhung the streets, most of the flags bearing mottoes of a congratulatory kind, such as "God bless Sir Moses." "Welcome 100," figured conspicuously in one place, and a variety of other emblazonments brightened the town. At nine in the morning, a party of singers gave a serenade concert in front of Sir Moses Montefiore's window, at Ramsgate, and the venerable baronet sent his special thanks, and desired them to repeat it in a fortnight's time. During the concert the following telegram was received from the Queen.—"I congratulate you sincerely on your entering into the 100th year of a useful and honourable life." Sir Moses thereupon desired the singers to give the National Anthem, which request was complied with. A congratulatory message was also received from the Duke of Edinburgh.

The event of the day was a procession representative of all classes, to present to Sir Moses addresses referring to the occasion. The cavalcade, which was upwards of a mile in length, was formed between Royal-crescent and the Eagle, in High street. All the governing bodies of the district, the various trades, the police, magistrates, fire-brigades, friendly societies, lifeboat men, coastguards, and school-children took part in the procession. While it was passing through the narrow and crowded streets of the town a guard of honour, consisting of the East Kent Battalion of Rifle Volunteers, drew up in front of East Cliff Lodge, which is situate in St. Lawrence, on a pleasant slope of the cliff overlooking the sea. Sir Moses Montefiore made his appearance at the open window of the

drawing room. He was evidently not in strong health, but it seemed that he appreciated the demonstration made in his favour. The men under Captain Burrows went through a few military evolutions, and Sir Moses briefly addressed them. "God bless you, my boys," he said, "I am very glad to see you all." He went on to thank them for their visit, expressed his good wishes towards them, and bade them give three hearty cheers for Her Majesty the Queen, leading the cheering himself. Sir Moses Montefiore then called for another cheer for the Queen, he expressing a great love for the country of his adoption. "For ages and ages may she prosper?" he said, and when the fire brigades went by, he called out to the men that they were "Brave boys?"

At the little bridge leading to the lawn, each detachment left a deputation, and when the rear of the procession had disappeared through the trees, and the last strains of the bands had died away, the representatives were ushered into the drawing-room. Here Sir Moses personally received the numerous addresses which were sent from various parts of the Continent, as well as from many eminent persons in this country. Besides the formal addresses, gentlemen came to present their thanks personally to Sir Moses for the services he had rendered in various noble philanthropic causes, among them being a Polish Jew and a number of Jewish ladies, who kissed the hand of Sir Moses with the reverence due to a patriarch of their race.

The address of the inhabitants of Ramsgate was presented by the Vicar, the Rev. E. Shirley Woomer, and it was accompanied by a book in which were written the

ames of many distinguished men throughout the country. The address was of such a nature that the venerable recipient appeared overcome with emotion at the kindly regard exhibited towards him, and in broken words he said, "If it pleased God to make me the most eloquent man I could never express what I feel. God bless you all." Indeed rejoicings took place all over Ramsgate, and the commemoration proceedings were closed by the ignition of a huge bonfire on the East Cliff and a display of fireworks.

Sir Moses Montefiore, wrote generally to the editors of the London Press the following letter :—

"Sir,—May I ask the privilege of expressing through your columns my heartfelt thanks towards the very large number of friends and public bodies who have so considerately offered me their esteemed congratulations on the occasion of my entering this day into my hundredth year? Grateful to Providence for the merciful protection which has been vouchsafed to me during my long life, I rejoice in the reflection that my feeble efforts I may have made to advance the happiness and welfare of my fellow-creatures have been so kindly judged. With a fervent prayer for the health and long life of our gracious Queen, whose beneficent sway over this great and free country has caused so much happiness to all classes of her subjects, reiterating my thanks to my numerous friends, and acknowledging your own courteous and flattering remarks, I have the honour to remain, yours faithfully,

"MOSES MONTEFIORE.

East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate,

"8 Chesvan, 5644

"(8 Nov., 1883)."

In the commonest London Jewish quarters the rejoicings were very

remarkable. In the "Broad of the Lane"—that is to say the wide part of Middlesex Street, the enthusiasm was universal. One tradesman illuminated his house with lamps, setting out the centenarian's motto—"Think and Thank." Here wine, beers, spirits, flowed to all who would come and drink Sir Moses's health, while on all sides flashed occasional coloured fires, and the mob cheered. Portraits of the hero of the day appeared in every window, and in an especial small-ware shop the portrait was helped by this legend—

I
ooo

yeeres hold.

Throughout the world the Hebrew rejoiced that Sir Moses Montefiore, the best of Jews, had lived to so patriarchal an age.

But as the present year went on the news now and again was repeated that Sir Moses Montefiore was sinking. The last account of his activity was dated just after his hundredth birthday. The statement was as follows :—

"Sir Moses Montefiore continues in good health. He still manages a large correspondence, and transacts a good deal of business. His wonderful memory is but little impaired, but the severe illness of last spring has left a weakness which occasionally causes anxiety to his friends. When strong enough to receive them, he derives much pleasure from the visits of his friends, whom he entertains with much of his old vivacity and eloquence."

His death had been anticipated for weeks before it occurred. He died from sheer exhaustion and quite free from pain. He was buried with the highest possible honours.

He had died a very rich man. His will had been executed in January, 1882, and was of great length, occupying about twenty large folio sheets. The value of the personalty was between £350,000 and £380,000. The testament commences with a touching and characteristic expression of thankfulness to God for having preserved him with unclouded mind and cheerful spirits to his 98th year. He praises God for the mercy vouchsafed to him and prays that the beneficent works which he was permitted to further may continue after his death. He directs that his funeral shall be conducted with simplicity and a careful avoidance of pomp.

The executors were Lord Rothschild, Mr. Joseph Sebag, Mr. Arthur Cohen, Q.C., M.P., and Dr. L. Loewe, each of whom received £1,000, besides other specific gifts. Mr. Joseph Sebag was the residuary legatee, and to him was bequeathed East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate, with its appurtenances, grounds, and estate attached, consisting of about thirty acres, all practically entailed. The lease of the house in Park-lane with its furniture, was left to Mr. Arthur Cohen, but the bulk of the pictures were reserved for the Judith Theological College, Ramsgate. To Mr. and Mrs. H. Guedalla was bequeathed the life interest in about £35,000; after their death half reverted to the estate and half towards endowing the Ramsgate Synagogue.

The Judith Theological College, Ramsgate was also largely endowed. Upwards of £30,000 was bequeathed to the congregational and charitable institutions in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, and about £15,000 to charitable institutions in London and Ramsgate, as well as some gifts to the churches of Ramsgate and neighbourhood.

To the Spanish and Portuguese Jews' congregation (the charities of which were largely benefited) was bequeathed £500, and to the United Synagogue £1,000. About £20,000 was absorbed in various personal legacies, the list of which was very long. Few, if any, of those to whom Sir Moses evinced affection or esteem during his lifetime were forgotten, but many had died after the will was made, although only three years had elapsed. Among the personal bequests were £5,000 to his niece, Miss Nellie Montefiore (daughter of Mr. Horatio Montefiore), £1,000 to Mr. and Mrs. Isidore Spielman (son-in-law and daughter of Mr. Sebag), £100 each to his many grand-nieces and grand-nephews, and £500 to the Chief Rabbi and Mrs. Adler. The names of Lord and Lady Hammond and of several clergymen also figured in the long list. All the bequests were left free of legacy duty. His horses and carriages were left to his coachman, and all his devoted faithful servants receive annuities and legacies.



LIVING AND POSSIBLY STILL LIVING CENTENARIANS.

MISS PICARD (*see Picard, 1878.*)

This lady was in 1881 still living Quebec. Since that date nothing has been heard of her. She has probably joined her aged family.

DELL NOBLET.

Living (1878). Aged 100.

On the 19th of October, Dell Noblet, of Wilmington, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, celebrated his 100th birthday. He was still living at Christmas, and followed the even sensible course of life that he had observed from his youth. His hearing was quite acute, but his eyesight was failing to an extent that caused him great anxiety, particularly as he was naturally inclined to hearty sociability. He was born in Middletown Township, Delaware County, Pa., and was of French Huguenot extraction, his ancestors being among those who fled from France to the North of Ireland to escape the persecutions of Charles II., at the time of the St. Bartholomew massacre, 1572. When the Swedish colony was being organised, and they had selected the shores of the Delaware River as their place of settlement, his paternal ancestor was among the first to leave

Ireland and unite with them. He settled in what is now Darby Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

In 1821 Mr. Noblet was married to Elizabeth Wiall, of Philadelphia, by whom he had three children—all dead (1878). After ten years of wedded life his wife died, August 27th, 1831, and after remaining a widower over a year, he married Elizabeth Bratton, of Brandywine Hundred. By this union he had thirteen children, only six of whom are living (1878)—three sons and three daughters. Of grandchildren the old gentleman has had forty-five, twenty-seven of whom are living; thirty-eight great-grandchildren, of whom twenty-seven survive, and there have been, even to the fifth generation, two great-great-grandchildren.

In the years of his more active life he was one of the wardens of St. Andrew's Protestant Episcopal Church, where, for a long time, he was a constant communicant, and regularly every Sunday, until 1877 he was to be found amongst the congregation. In pursuing the even tenor of his way he lived frugally and temperately, avoiding liquor and tobacco. It was his uniform practice to retire at nine o'clock in the evening, and another

rule, carefully followed, was to observe extreme moderation in the quantity of his food. He informed a friend that until 1876 he had not taken medicine for sixty years.

EULALIA PERREZ.

THE OLDEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

Living in 1878. Aged 140.

Among the remarkable objects to which the members of the Frank Leslie Transcontinental Excursion had their attention attracted, while in California (1877), not the least interesting was the venerable lady whose name heads this article. A lively account of an interview with this survivor of one hundred and forty summers is given in Mrs. Frank Leslie's book, "From Gotham to the Golden Gate," from which we transcribe the following extracts :—

"While in San Francisco we had been shown the photograph of Eulalia Perrez, of Los Angeles—the oldest woman in the world—and now finding ourselves in the close vicinity, we resolved on paying her a visit. Mr. Baldwin accordingly drove us to her house, a quaint old brown adobe structure, with a projecting roof sloping steeply from the centre, and two or three old wine-vats built against the walls.

"We mounted to a piazza, where we were met by a very pretty and very typical Spanish girl, wearing a high comb and speaking English with a very charming accent. She showed us into a sitting-room, and having sent to call the old lady, entertained us to the best of her ability, informing us she was Senora Eulalia's great-great-granddaughter, her grandmother, the youngest grandchild, being sixty-five years old; her own father is an American,

named Michael White; her great-great-grandmother's age, she said, was about one hundred and forty; 'but old as she is, she cannot speak a word of English' added she, with conscious pride in her own proficiency. She said the old lady was always cheerful and sweet-tempered, although growing a trifle childish.

"Presently she went out and returned with her great-great-grandmother on her arm, a short, shrunken figure, dressed in a dark calico skirt and sacque, with a grey shawl and gay carpet-slippers, her head queerly covered by a close-fitting black merino hood with a white kerchief inside, and no hair visible even upon the forehead; her skin was almost as dark as a mulatto's, and seamed with a million fine wrinkles. Her eyes were shrunken to such a degree as to give the impression of having disappeared altogether, leaving only two narrow loopholes, red as fire, and uncanny to look upon; but she presently gave a proof that the power of discriminating sight remained, for, after having talked with me for some time, she inquired if I were married, and, being answered in the affirmative, demanded to *which* of the gentlemen present.

"The Chief stood at the farther end of the room, speaking with a friend in the party, and indicating him, I said, 'The gentleman with gray hair.' 'Yes,' replied Eulalia quickly, 'but there are two gentlemen with gray hair; which is yours?' Then surveying first the one, and then the other, she exclaimed rather impatiently, 'Well, I should not think you need have married a man with white hair,' and added some comments upon my appearance, which showed that at least her sight was perfect, whatever may be thought of her taste and

judgment. She seemed quite delighted at my speaking to her in Spanish, and kept up the conversation in an eager and animated manner, and with a strength of voice and quickness of hearing quite extraordinary, accompanying her words with marked gesticulations.

"She wore a brown rosary about her neck, and, on my referring to her being a good Catholic, said that by the crucifix she had learned the lesson of how to live, and she hoped, how to die. She had been married twice, and said that in her youth she had many lovers, but could not decide which of them to marry until the *padre* interfered and insisted that she must make a choice, which she accordingly did. She was left a widow and again she made a selection, and one based on maturer judgment. So she had been even happier in her second nuptials than in her first.

"When asked her age, she counted on her fingers ten, twenty, thirty, and so on, up to 140, and it is certain, and on record, that when the present church of the Mission of San Gabriel was built, in 1771, she was a married woman with three children. She has three daughters and two sons alive, and grandchildren 80 years old, all settled around the Mission, and she lives with all of them alternately, going to church regularly every Sunday.

"In 1875 she executed a piece of fine embroidery for sale at a fair and still uses her needle constantly. It was proposed to take her to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia, and she actually went as far as the cars, when some of her relatives, to whom she is a revenue, interfered, and brought her home again. Perhaps it was as well, for she has never been in all her long life farther than *eight miles from*

Loretto, her birthplace, and the fatigue and excitement would, no doubt, have been a risk. By the time she had told all this, we feared that the dear old lady, who, by-the-way, was most exquisitely neat, might be tired, although she gave no signs of fatigue; and so rose to take our leave. She appeared really sorry to have us go, and followed us quite out to the carriage, bidding the spokeswoman an especial good-bye with a prettily turned Spanish compliment, not only upon my appearance, but what she called my amiability in visiting and talking to and cheering a poor old woman. Pressing my hand in a firm, almost virile manner, she gently uttered in a sweet, pure Spanish, the blessing which comes with such authority and sanctity from aged lips, and we parted with mutual regret."

MR. ROBINSON.

Aged 103.

HIS WIFE.

Aged 102. Living 1878.

The following paragraph went the round of the American papers in 1878:—

"Mr. and Mrs. Robinson, of Mountain City, Texas, are probably the oldest married couple in the country, the former being 103 and the latter 102 years old. They have lived together 82 years."

NEWCASTLE CHRONICLE CENTENARIAN.

Living 1879.

A correspondent of the *Newcastle Chronicle* wrote in this year:—

"There is at present living at Crook a most interesting old lady, who will enter on her 113th year about two months hence, having

been born in the county of Westmeath, Ireland, on the 19th of December, 1767, the year in which the Jesuits were expelled from Spain, Genoa, and Venice, and Wallis and Cateret, Cook's predecessors, made their discoveries in the South Seas. She was nearly seven years old when the American War commenced, and twelve and a half at the time of the No-Popery Riots in London, raised by Lord George Gordon. Her eldest son is 75 years old or thereabouts. She is in possession of all her senses, but very feeble. She was photographed the other day by Messrs Jackson and Plews, and might be taken in the *carte* for a woman of eighty."

NEGRO BARNES.

Living 1880. Aged 115.

Dillard Barnes, a coloured man of Greene, Ga. (U.S.A.) 46 years old, has a perfectly white patch of hair in the centre of his head surrounded with black. His father, who lived to be 115 years old, had a similar patch. Dr. Walker, gave this information.

THE TWO MAINE SISTER CENTENARIANS.

Living 1880. Aged 105—102.

Mrs. Lucy, of Houlton, Maine, was (1880) 102 years old. She had a sister three years older.

UNCLE SANTA QUANTA.

Living 1880. Aged 120.

Dr. J. C. Neal, of Archer (Florida), is responsible for the following:—

"Uncle Santa Quanta, living near Archer, was brought from West

Africa in 1778, and is now about 120 years old. His story, as he tells it, is interesting, and I give it in his own language:—

"Me big boy in ole country; some hair on face. Gola man catch me, tie and sell me to ship man. Ship have foah mas', big sail. Me tink goin' to put us in big pot an' eat us; song while sailing. British war ship nearly cotch us; shoot off one mas'. Got in Charles'n in moahning; stay there two weeks. Mas'r Stevens buy me, take to Georgia, way up near Augusta. Injuns plenty, big Injuns. Mas'r good to Quanta, tell niggers to let Quanta alone; if dey bodder I chunk 'em.—Sho! me big man, lif bag cotton; mock everybody till I get de talk. Me, Quanta, mean ribber in my talk—mos' forgot all de ole talk. Mary Anna—she Gola nigger, live with her till she die, when Injun war begin (1817); den took Jennie, live wid her till year 'fore stars fall (1832); go to Alabama dat year, stay till next war (1847); come to Florida, had 'nother Jennie till freedom war; she die. No wife five year, den get Nellie. Me strong man in Georgia, allus had four row cotton. Have had foah chillun; one by Nellie (1867).

"Big war when I come (1780). Palm tree, cocoanut, lion, tiger, elfant, in my country; fight bow and arrer, King have seven wives—one a week, big thorn fence around town, gold in sand, plenty wild hog. Monkey? Sho! seen tree hundred in gang."

"The old fellow got alarmed at my writing.

"What gone to do wid me?"

"I assured him of my peaceful intentions, and he consented to a physical examination.

"Quanta has been a powerful man, standing over six feet, but is

now very much bent, limbs shrunken, face prognathic, angle of jaw very obtuse, sight and hearing dull, *arcus senilis* nearly covering iris, teeth worn nearly to the gums, but only three absent, appetite good, pulse fifty to the minute. He is a Baptist, and loves "'bacco" dearly. He has considerable manhood left, notwithstanding his 100 years of matrimonial strife, and as he may be said to vegetate rather than to live, it is probable that he may live many years yet."

CHRISTY MACPHERSON.

Living 1882. Aged 107.

Christy Macpherson, of Skye, aged 107, received in that year £3 from the Queen. Said a jocular journal of the period, "This is the royal bounty for triplets, and ladies who desire it have now a choice either to increase the quiverful by three, or to live to 107 like this female Christy, who lives in her little Skye parlour."

HENRY JOHNSON (Negro).

Living 1882. Aged 100.

Henry Johnson, who kept Gen. Andrew Jackson supplied with water during the battle of New Orleans, and who cleaned the warrior's sword the next day, is living at Oberlin, Ohio, at the age of 109 years. Johnson was sold on the auction block in King and Queen Co., Va., when 18, and served Colonel Dick Taylor until transferred to Gen. Jackson's household.

CATHARINE ALBERT.

Living 1882. Aged 107.

There was then living in the little village of Bakersville, in

Coshocton Co., Ohio, a lady whose age dated back to the Declaration of Independence by at least one year and probably more. Her name was Catharine Albert. Mrs. Albert's maiden name was Cutshell, and she was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1775, although the month is not exactly known, as the old German family Bible, in which the records were kept was lost when the family removed to Ohio. She had seven brothers and three sisters, and although not the youngest, she is the only one surviving of this family of eleven children. When 25 years old Catharine was married to John Albert, four years her junior, by whom she had eleven children. Her husband died in 1861 at the age of 82. Mrs. Albert's oldest child was in 1882 about 80 years old. Her hair was as white as the driven snow, and her face was considerably wrinkled. She was totally blind, could hear very little, and had almost lost her speech, as she could not be understood by any one except her daughter Elizabeth and her grand-daughter Fanny, who were her constant attendants. Up to 1881 she always enjoyed good health, and just before she took to her bed she dried, without assistance, five bushels of apples. After that time she kept her bed, and her only food was pap, prepared from milk. She was probably the oldest woman in Ohio, if not in the country, being 107 years of age.

"OLD DINAH."

(An Indian Pensioner).

Living 1882. Aged 108.

"Old Dinah," an Onondaga Indian squaw then living on the New York reservation at a wonderful age and in great bodily infirmity,

in this year received a pension of £1. 12s. a month and arrears of £80. Those who ought to know as much about her as ever can be learnt affirm that she is 108 years old. While the pension agent was reading to her the official notification that a pension had been granted she listened attentively until he finished the clause, "so long as said Dinah John shall remain in her widowhood"—when she broke into a hearty laugh and exclaimed, "Me too old now."

MISS S. M'K MORFORD.

Living 1882. Aged 100.

Miss Selby M'Kee Morford, a native of Ware, Hertfordshire, residing at Twickenham, 10th November, 1882 attained her hundredth birthday just previously to this date.

MRS. MARIME WRIGHT.

Living 1882. Aged 104.

"In Addison Vermont" (U.S.A.) "there is a notable old lady in the person of Mrs. Marime Wright, who is 104 years old, reads her Bible without glasses, and has just made a quilt of 36 pieces. She has occupied her present residence for ninety-eight years, and on her father's side has known eight generations. Her health is still fairly good, hearing excellent, and mind active. She heard the cannon during the battle of Plattsburgh, and after the engagement went on board Commodore Macdonough's flagship. Her father was a revolutionary soldier, and was with Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga."—*New York Mercury*

JUAN CAPISTRANO.

Living 1882. Aged 123.

In this year a party of four persons visited Juan Capistrano, at his home

in a little valley among the hills at the base of Monte Santa Lucia, Monterey County, California, 15 miles west of the Mission San Antonio. "Juan was born near the Mission in 1762, and baptized into the Catholic Church in 1771, when 9 years of age. He is now, therefore, 125 years old, as shown by the Mission records. Juan is an Indian of rather low stature, but broad-chested and muscular, with a large, massive head, still covered with an abundance of iron-gray hair. In shaking hands his firm grasp indicates a good deal of physical vigor. Though now blind he still walks about, and until three years ago worked his little plot of ground. How much of the most important part of the world's history has been made during the life of this man! But I apprehend it has been all the same to Juan, who, in his Indian fashion, has said his Ave Marias and Pater Nosters and eaten his acorns and beef, undisturbed by the changes wrought by his more ambitious and restless fellow-man. Though remarkable only for his great age, one cannot but feel something of awe in the presence of this living link connecting the present with the remote past."—*Aaron Hope.*

NEW YORK CENTENARIAN.

Living 1883. Aged 105.

One of the more terrible instances of centenarianism came from New York in 1883. The case became known through the following paragraph which was published throughout America:—

"A woman who, at the age of 105, was dependent on her daughter's earnings for a living, is now dying of hunger in New York. The daughter was burned to death by the fire in the old World building a few weeks since. The mother has

been several times to the proprietor of that building for help, but she has never been able to find him 'in.'"

Almost within forty-eight hours of this paragraph appearing in print a fund was raised, which provided means for her sustenance through several years. Nothing more has since been heard about the hapless woman.

ELISHA DURDEN.

Living 1883. Aged 102.

Elisha Durden, of Walton County, Georgiana, was then said to be 102 years old. He picked a bale of cotton in his centennial year.

MRS. BEAL.

Living 1883. Aged 102.

"This old lady was born in the parish of Pevensey, Sussex, on March 20, 1783; was baptised in the Church of St. Nicholas, Pevensey; married at Hastings, on May 1, 1814, and has spent nearly the whole of her life in her native parish. She retains the whole of her senses, is in good health, and of a cheerful disposition. A few years ago she met with an accident to her thigh, and, being of such an advanced age, it was found impossible to reset the limb, so she has to use a crutch, and is assisted by her only daughter, with whom she resides. Her photograph was taken by Messrs. G. and R. Lavis, of Eastbourne, in April, 1883. They were indebted to the Rev. Canon Sutton, Vicar of Pevensey, for the copy of the Parish Record, which register contains the entries of births since 1566."—*The Illustrated London News*, May 12, 1883.

MRS. PATIENCE HOPPING.

Living 1883. Aged 100.

March 21 in this year was the one hundredth birthday of Mrs. Patience Hopping, the widow of the late Capt. Hopping, of Middleton Township, New Jersey (New York), and the event was celebrated by the old lady's descendants. Among those present, or who sent tokens of congratulation, were 100 grandchildren and great-grandchildren and four great-great-grandchildren. Mrs. Hopping was in excellent health then.

N.A. INDIAN CENTENARIAN.

Living 1883. Aged 120.

The *Mobile Register* said in this year:—

"An Indian woman 120 years of age lives near Fitzpatrick, in Bullock Co., Ga. She was on General Andrew Jackson's staff as a cook when he cut a road through the country to Florida, and has some pots and kettles in which she used to cook the General's frugal food."

ROBERT GIBSON.

Living 1883. Aged 116.

Brookfield, Macon Co., Mobile, is still possibly the home of Robert Gibson, who was "spry" in 1883, at the alleged age of 116 years. He recollected dimly the Revolutionary war and the Presidency of General Washington. Mr. Gibson's oldest boy was a lad of 81, and his "baby," with whom he was then living, 44. He was twice married, and had thirteen children living and three dead. One of his sons had, in 1883, twenty children. His direct descendants at this date reaching to the fifth generation, numbered nearly four hundred.

JACK HUEY.*Living 1883. Aged 112.*

Jack Huey, a coloured man, who in 1883 lived near Charlotte (North Carolina), claimed to be 112 years old. He was brought from Africa about eighty years since, and when landed in an American port was a full-grown and well-matured man. The change in climate was so great in his transition from a torrid sun to the cold blasts of an American winter that his body became very badly frost-bitten and his toes dropped off. Jack never had a toe within the memory of any living acquaintance.

BOYDTON NEGRESS CENTENARIAN.*Living 1883. Aged 100.*

It was stated in this year that there was then living near Boydton, Mecklenburg Co., Virginia, a coloured woman in her 100th year, who had never taken a dose of medicine of any kind in all her life. She was then hale and hearty, and seemed likely to live quite a number of years longer.

GEORGIAN CENTENARIAN.*Aged 101.*

There was a man living in Georgia, in 1884, at the age of 85 years, whose father was 101 years when he was born, and who lived to accompany him to the polls to cast his first vote. The son, in 1883, split rails, built fence, dug "goobers" and bade fair to live as long as his father.

AUSTRALIAN CENTENARIAN.*Living 1884. Aged 107.*

In August 1884, the London press, generally, stated :—

"An Australian paper announces

that there is a woman in that country who is 107 years old, and adds—'Her parents can point to her with pride as a sample of their success in rearing children.'"

A RUSSIAN CENTENARIAN.*Living 1884. Aged 127.*

According to the *SamarSKI Gazette* (1884) there was living in the town of Sysran an old man aged 127. His age was indubitably attested. He was wounded in the Battle of Borodino, and afterwards entered Paris with the Allied Army. This aged veteran, who was still in the possession of all his faculties, subsisted on the precarious charity of his neighbours.

THE CHICAGO CENTENARIAN.*Living 1884. Aged 118.*

In 1884 the news ran over America that a woman 118 years old had been discovered at Chicago and brought to light. She appears to have failed to prove that she was far past 100. In relation with this interesting discovery, a very good joke was perpetrated. The Boston papers were complaining that the singers in opera comic, especially the ladies, did not shine by way of their youth, hence the following wheeze:—"It is reported that the 118 year old woman recently discovered at Chicago has joined a Boston Comic Opera Company."

BODLE HOLMES.*Living 1885. Aged 106.*

A centenarian of 106 is now (1885), living at Heathfield, Sussex. This old villager was born at Heathfield, which place he has never left, and is strong enough to sit about his garden, while he can

still enjoy a chat, though, as with most very old people, he remembers the events of his youth better than those of recent times. Years ago some charitable person provided that old Bodle Holmes should receive weekly, a clay pipe and an allowance of tobacco, and neither smoking nor beer have injured his health.

M. DE JENCIN PAGE.

Living 1885. Aged over 100.

There might have been read in *The Daily News* for 6th January 1885, the following statement:—

"Another centenarian, quite authentic, I believe, is gazetted by the Paris journals. M. de Jencin Page, of the First Empire, entered his 101st year yesterday, and is hale and active. When 95 he shot partridges."

MR. STIRTAN, OF CUPAR-ANGUS.

Living 1885. Aged 100.

"The papers have been announcing the death of 'the oldest Freemason in Europe,' this being a Mr. Eliot, who died a few days ago at Weymouth, in his 92nd year, he having been a Freemason for seventy years. Mr. Eliot, however, was by no means 'the oldest Freemason in Europe,' or even in Great Britain, for Mr. Stirtan, of Cupar-Angus, who is in his 100th year, was initiated into Cupar-Angus, St. John's Lodge, in 1808."—*Truth*, 29th January, 1885.

MIGUEL LOLLO.

Living 1885. Aged 180.

Another of the recent Spanish-American instances, all of which are to be accepted with caution.

"He resides at Bogota, New Grenada, S. America; he is now

180 years of age, of semi-Spanish origin, and his name is Miguel Lollo. The signature of this venerable *anciano* is affixed to a deed relating to the foundation of a convent, and is dated 1712. Dr. Hernandez, who had heard about this Miguel Lollo, was desirous of making his acquaintance, and found him busy gardening. His skin is like parchment, and his hair as white as snow."—*La Epoca* (May 1885), published in New Grenada.

MR. W. WILLIAMS'S CENTENARIAN.

Living 1885. Aged 102.

In October, 1883, there appeared in the *Daily News* a letter, of which the following is a copy:—

"Sir,—I have just returned after spending the day with a gentleman who has just completed his hundredth year. There can be no doubt that he has attained the honoured position, for the day of his birth is recorded on his baptismal certificate—viz., October 21, 1783. I was astonished to find that his memory continued unimpaired. He talked of events that happened 80 years ago as clearly as if they had occurred a week since. One fact he referred to was the death of his mother when he was only four years old. It seems that he found his way alone into the room where she was—dead—and he spoke to her, but obtaining no reply he stayed in the room in bitter trouble, and he was found there after some time crying bitterly. He mentions also that John Wesley was in the habit of staying at his father's house, and that on one occasion the old man took the child in his arms and blessed him. He told us of many incidents connected with his stay in the West Indies when quite a young

man ; amongst other things he has a very vivid recollection of landing at Plymouth quite "hard up." He went to a jeweller and asked the value of his watch ; the man said about £5. He at once offered to sell it, but he found that buying and selling were quite distinct transactions, for the jeweller would only give a few shillings. He then thought of pawning it, but after walking four or five times past the pawnbroker's he had not courage enough to go in. At last a happy thought struck him, and he went to a certain captain (he remembered the name), and after some talk the Captain so far trusted him that he backed a bill drawn on the young man's father, and the old man to-day vividly recalls his joy on receiving in the course of post (not so rapid as nowadays) a letter from his father with the needful cash. He said with pride there were three things he had never been guilty of—he had never smoked, he had never been drunk, and he had never sworn, in all his long life. Of course he is feeble, but he gets about the house with the help of two walking-sticks. He took a little turn in his garden to-day. His eyesight is feeble, but he can see any object indistinctly. He could tell that my wife had a white cap with red trimming. He can hear what is said if spoken to distinctly. I am glad to say that his general health is fairly good.—I am, Sir, yours faithfully,

"W. WILLIAMS.

"23, Highbury-place, Islington, N."

This centenarian was still alive and well in August, 1885. Mr. W.

Williams (August 5, 1885) was good enough to write to the compiler of this work as follows :—

"I am glad to say that my old friend is still well, and though feeble (as a matter of course) is able to get about a little. His sight is failing and he is more deaf than when I last saw him. If he lives till October he will be 102.

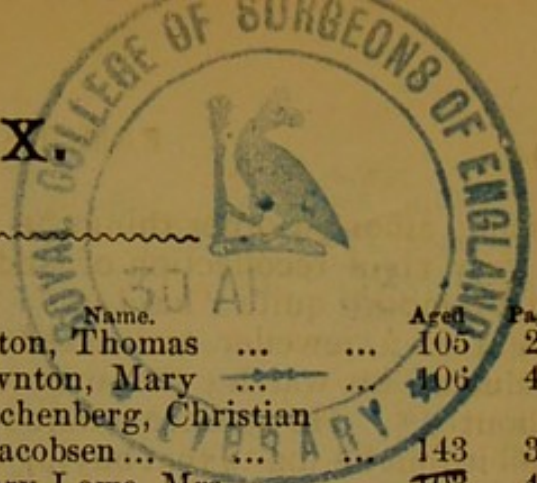
"I would give you his name, but he is so very reticent, and dislikes any sort of publicity.

"I have not lately heard from him, but his writing is still legible. I shall be happy to give you any particulars you wish, but during his life I should not like to have them made public. I have a very good photograph of him."

Mr. Williams does well not to reveal the particulars of this very interesting case, for he saves himself and his friend from that virulence of attack which more than probably, in event of publicity, would be directed against them both ; by those several writers who still exist, authors who appear to devote their lives to trying to prove that centenarianism is impossible. Their efforts, even if based on a desire to be truthful rather than perverse, are manifestly unkind. To deprive aged people of that hope of life which the acceptance of the possibility of centenarianism yields ; to impress upon the aged the despair of believing themselves doomed to die before a given date ; is to achieve not only an act of cruelty, but one of odious vanity. It is not within the province of mortal man to decide as to the limit of human life.



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