The American Association for the Advancement of Science:

Training, Practice and Mental Longevity: Professor Walter R. Miles ........................................ 79

Obituary:

Nathaniel Lord Britton. Recent Deaths .................. 87

Scientific Events:

Congress for Prehistoric Research in the Far East; The Third International Congress of Soil Science; Report of Director of the New York Botanical Garden; Fellowships in Medicine of the National Research Council; The New Dean of the Yale School of Medicine; The Rochester Meeting of the Geological Society of America ............... 89

Scientific Notes and News ................................ 92

Discussion:

The Whitney South Sea Expedition; Dr. Frank M. Chapman. The Western Invasion of Samoa Cecropia; Professor T. D. A. Cockereil. The Ring Structure of Thymidine; Dr. P. A. Levene and R. Stuart Tipson ............................................. 95

Societies and Meetings:

The Tennessee Academy of Science: Professor John T. McGill. The Second Quadrennial Congress of the Mathematicians of the Slave Countries: Professor S. Leipschitz ............................................. 98

Scientific Apparatus and Laboratory Methods:


Special Articles:

Measurement of the Velocity of Light in a Partial Vacuum: The late A. A. Michelson, Dr. F. G. Pease and F. Pearson. Experimental Stimulation Deafness: Dr. Hallowell Davis, Arthur J. Derbyshire, Edward H. Kemp, Moses H. Lurie and Morgan Upton ......................................................... 100

Science News ................................................. 5

SCIENCE: A Weekly Journal devoted to the Advancement of Science, edited by J. McKeen Cattell and published every Friday by THE SCIENCE PRESS

New York City: Grand Central Terminal


SCIENCE is the official organ of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Information regarding membership in the Association may be secured from the office of the permanent secretary, in the Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

TRAINING, PRACTICE AND MENTAL LONGEVITY 1

By Professor WALTER R. MILES

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"Every body knows," wrote Cohauen in 1742, "how grateful and refreshing we discern the breath of cows to be, which is thence supposed, exceedingly wholesome; . . . There seems, therefore, to be nothing forced or absurd, in conceiving that the warm, active, and balsonic particles thrown off by the lungs of young people into the air, which they respire, may give it such a quality, as when sucked in again by a person in years, shall communicate an extraordinary force to the circulating humors in his body, and so quicken and enliven them, as to bestow a kind of reflective youthfulness, which may for many years keep off and delay those infirmities, to which people of the same age are generally subject. The more we consider this doctrine . . . the more we shall be satisfied of the truth of this conjecture, and the more credibly this invention of Hermippus will appear." 2

The indulgent smiles called forth by this hot-air paragraph of hope from a former generation give pause to anyone who undertakes a discourse on any phase of the subject of longevity. The perennial search for the elixir vitae stands as one of the seven extravagancies of the mind of man, and he who openly shows himself to be a prospector here or near here may expect to hear voices in concert quoting, "What fools these mortals be!"

Having answered to the description and having attended to these introductory formalities of the occasion may I then proceed to tell you what I intend to say. This paper will deal with normal longevity from a psychological viewpoint. It will not concern cen-

1 Address of the retiring vice-president and chairman of the section on psychology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Pittsburgh, December 28, 1934.
