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MAN'S MOST CREATIVE YEARS: THEN AND NOW

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In previous articles the present writer has presented age-curves which set forth the chronological ages at which world-famous geniuses have either achieved or first published their best work. The present study is an attempt to discover whether or not the age-curves thus far obtained are destined to hold for future as well as for past centuries. Although one can not be entirely certain as to what will happen in the centuries that lie ahead, it seems quite possible that a review of what has occurred in the past may provide one with a preview of what is likely to occur in the immediate future.

As a means of investigating the age-changes that may already have taken place the writer has partitioned some of his data upon the basis of the periods during which the various types of creative thinkers were born. In partitioning the data it was assumed that, if any change has already occurred in the chronological ages at which eminent thinkers have accomplished the various things which enabled them to attain recognition, this change would perhaps be revealed by study of the partitioned data.

For example, W. F. Magie's "A Source Book in Physics" sets forth the chronological ages at which 140 notable contributions to the science of physics were either made or first published by 89 deceased individuals. In Fig. 1 the broken line sets forth the average number of contributions per ten-year interval for approximately the 50 per cent. that were earliest born, and the solid line sets forth similar information for the 50 per cent. that were most recently born. In both of these age-curves the average number of con-

1 H. C. Lehman and W. S. Gamertsfelder, Psychological Review, 1942, 49; 319–344. (A bibliography of 9 articles of this series is to be found on page 343. In this list the 11th reference should be to the Psychological Review instead of to the Psychological Bulletin.

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