The Art of Living Long

Louis Cornaro

1903 English translation by William F. Butler

Classics in Longevity and Aging

Springer Publishing Company
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Bosom up my counsel; 
You’ll find it wholesome.—William Shakespeare.

Deign, reader, to be taught, 
Whate’er thy strength of body, force of thought. 
—David Garrick.

Know, prudent, cautious, self-control 
Is wisdoms root. 
—Robert Burns.

Wouldst thou enjoy a long life, a healthy body, and a vigorous mind, 
and be acquainted also with the wonderful works of God, labor in the first 
place to bring thy appetite to reason.—Benjamin Franklin.

There is no chance in results.—Ralph Waldo Emerson.
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Foreword

Long before Nathan Pritikin, Kenneth Cooper, Mel Zuckerman and other far-sighted individuals brought to our attention the importance of healthy lifestyles that promote longevity and a good quality of life, Luigi Cornaro who died in 1566 at the age of 103, was advising contemporaries about the benefits of physical activity, moderation in diet, and limitations on alcohol consumption. Both by example and through his writing, Cornaro advanced the theory that people are responsible for their own health, and that diet and lifestyle contribute greatly to the length and quality of a person's life.

Known as The Venetian Centenarian, Cornaro describes how he transformed himself from a sickly and intemperate creature into a vigorous, healthy, and contented man by taking charge of his own health. His advice resonates with 21st century America, caught up as we are in a lifestyle that relies on motor transportation and sedentary activities, and an addiction to fast food. He speaks to the epidemic of Type 2 diabetes in overweight children and the decline of physical education classes in our schools.

Although he was neither a physician/geriatrician nor a trained gerontologist Cornaro was a keen observer in the grand tradition of medicine in that he experimented on himself and reported the results. In doing so he laid the foundation upon which later gerontologic work has been based.

Over 500 years after it was first written, The Art of Living Long is not only a classic in gerontology and the science of longevity, but it also remains fresh and relevant today, both as an intriguing tale in its own right, and as an instructive treatise on living well into great old age.

Robert N. Butler, MD
Against diseases known, the strongest fence
Is the defensive virtue, abstinence.

—Benjamin Franklin

For a people of whom less than a two-hundredth part of one percent reach an age that Nature intends all should pass,* the words of the aged author of "The Temperate Life" possess a deep import. To them this volume is addressed.

Louis Cornaro's own account—written toward the close of more than a century of life—of the means of his complete restoration from an almost hopeless complication of bodily infirmities, to the happy state he continued so long to enjoy, may be said to form a life story, which, in its peculiar significance, is without a parallel in history.

Not

"By showing conclusively and clearly
That death is a stupid blunder merely,
And not a necessity of our lives,"

but by demonstrating, in a manner most decisive, that the condition of perfect health—maintained to the full limit of life ordained by Nature—is a blessing within the power of every human being to realize, and by indicating the path by which all may attain it, did this excellent man earn his unique position among the benefactors of mankind. Let us hope that our positive and practical age, ever ready to judge a proposition by its degree of usefulness, will perceive that a rule of life which effected the recovery of a dying man, and enabled him to retain entire mental and bodily vigor beyond his hundredth year, is of incontestable merit.

*See Note A
While there are some, who, though of the number of Cornaro’s most zealous pupils, regret that he permitted wine to form a portion of his abstemious diet; yet, when his position on this question is contrasted with the prevailing custom of his country and age, his life is none the less recognized by all, as one of the most salutary examples of a truly temperate career the world has yet witnessed.

A carefully revised version of his celebrated treatise, made by able translators, is here presented. As a result of painstaking researches among ancient documents in the archives of Venice and Padua, historical matter relating to Cornaro and his family is also placed before the reader. Much of this is not to be found in any previous edition of his works, in the various languages into which they have been rendered.

Of the other eminent writers whose teachings on the subject of longevity we have included in this volume, little need here be said. One of them, not many years after the famous centenarian had passed away, emphasized to the world, in the Latin tongue, the substantial advantages Cornaro had reaped from the habit of complete self-restraint to which he had accustomed himself in early manhood, and from which, for the remainder of his days, he had never deviated. A century after Bacon, in the graceful tribute which Addison—one of the most practical philosophers of his age—pays to Cornaro, we have an introduction to the work of the illustrious Venetian that is truly worthy of his theme.

Acknowledgment for valuable assistance is gratefully made to Conte Comm. Filippo Grimani, LL. D., the honored Mayor of Venice; Cav. Prof. Angelo Scrinzi, Ph. D., Director of the Venetian Civic Museum, and Dr. Ricciotti Bratti, his associate; as well as Dr. Prof. Andrea Moschetti, Director of the Civic Museum of Padua. Thanks are due, also, to Dr. Prof. Emilio Lovarini, of Bologna, and Signor Michele Danesi, Editor of “L’Arte,” Rome, for their kind revision of the translation of “The Villas Erected by Louis Cornaro,” and for their consent to its publication. To Cav. Dr. Enrico Ridolfi, Director of the Royal Galleries and National Museum of Florence, and to the photographers Signori Fratelli Alinari, of the same city, this work is indebted for the copy of the Tintoretto painting of Louis Cornaro. Credit is accorded, for many helpful courtesies, to Miss Ida M. Street, author of “Ruskin’s Principles of Art Criticism,” and Messrs. Willard G. Bleyer, of the University of Wisconsin, and John G. Gregory, of Milwaukee.

William F. Butler
Milwaukee, March, 1903
If any man can convince me and bring home to me that I do not think or act aright, gladly will I change; for I search after truth, by which man never yet was harmed. But he is harmed who abideth on still in his deception and ignorance.

Do not think that what is hard for thee to master is impossible for man; but if a thing is possible and proper to man, deem it attainable by thee.

Persevere then until thou shalt have made these things thy own.

Like a mariner who has doubled the promontory, thou wilt find calm, everything stable, and a waveless bay.

—Marcus Aurelius Antoninus
INTRODUCTION

TO LOUIS CORNARO

BY

JOHN WITT RANDALL*

O thou that for an hundred years
  Didst lightly tread the ancestral hall,
Yet sawst thy brethren bathed in tears,
  Cut down ere ripe, and round thee fall,—

Well didst thou deem long life the measure
  Of long enjoyment to the wise,
To fools alone devoid of pleasure;
  Thou wouldst not die as the fool dies.

Robbed of thy titles, lands, and health,
  With man and fortune in disgrace,
In wisdom didst thou seek thy wealth,
  Thy peace in friendship to thy race.

With thine eleven grandchildren met,
  Thou couldst at will become the boy;
And, thine own sorrows to forget,
  Couldst lose thyself in others' joy,—

Couldst mount thy horse when past fourscore,
  And climb steep hills, and on dull days
Cheer the long hours with learned lore,
  Or spend thy wit on tales and plays.

*See Note B
In summer, thou wast friend of flowers,
    And, when the winter nights grew long,
And music cheered the evening hours,
    Still clearest was the old man's song.

Thus, while thy calm and thoughtful mind
    The ravages of time survived,
Three generations of mankind
    Dropped round thee, joyless and short-lived.

Thou sawest the flowers of youth decay,
    Half dried and withered through excess,
Till, nursed by virtue's milder ray,
    Thy green age grew to fruitfulness.

Thou sawest life's barque on troubled seas
    Long tossed; care's clouds thy skies o'ercast;
But calm content, with moderate breeze,
    Brought thee to wisdom's port at last.

Life's evening, wherein most behold
    Their season of regrets and fears,
Became for thee an age of gold,
    And gave thee all thy happiest years.

As gentle airs and genial sun
    Stay winter's march when leaves grow sere,
And, when the summer's race is run,
    With a new summer crown the year;

So temperance, like that lingering glow
    Which makes the October woods so bright,
Did on thy vale of years bestow
    A glorious autumn of delight.

What useful lessons might our race
    From thy so sage experience draw!
Earth might become a joyous place,
    Would man but reverence nature's law.

Soar folly, self, and sense above;
    Govern each mutinous desire;
Nor let the sacred flame of love
    In passion's hurricane expire.

No wondrous works of hand or mind
    Were thine; God bade thee stand and wait,
A living proof to all thy kind
    That a wise man may master fate.
THERE* is a story in the Arabian Nights’ Tales of a king who had
long languished under an ill habit of body, and had taken abun-
dance of remedies to no purpose. At length, says the fable, a phy-
sician cured him by the following method: he took a hollow ball of wood,
and filled it with several drugs; after which he closed it up so artificially
that nothing appeared. He likewise took a mall; and, after having hol-
lowed the handle, and that part which strikes the ball, he inclosed in
them several drugs after the same manner as in the ball itself. He then
ordered the sultan, who was his patient, to exercise himself early in the
morning with these rightly prepared instruments, till such time as he
should sweat; when, as the story goes, the virtue of the medicaments
perspiring through the wood, had so good an influence on the sultan’s
constitution, that they cured him of an indisposition which all the com-
positions he had taken inwardly had not been able to remove. This East-
ern allegory is finely contrived to show us how beneficial bodily labor is
to health, and that exercise is the most effectual physic. I have described
in my hundred and fifteenth paper, from the general structure and mech-
anism of a human body, how absolutely necessary exercise is for its pres-
ervation; I shall in this place recommend another great preservative of
health, which in many cases produces the same effects as exercise, and
may, in some measure, supply its place, where opportunities of exercise
are wanting. The preservative I am speaking of is temperance; which has
those particular advantages above all other means of health, that it may
be practiced by all ranks and conditions, at any season or in any place. It
is a kind of regimen into which every man may put himself, without
interruption to business, expense of money, or loss of time. If exercise
throws off all superfluities, temperance prevents them; if exercise clears
the vessels, temperance neither satiates nor overstrains them; if exercise
raises proper ferments in the humors, and promotes the circulation of the
blood, temperance gives nature her full play, and enables her to exert
herself in all her force and vigor; if exercise dissipates a growing distem-
per, temperance starves it.

Physic, for the most part, is nothing else but the substitute of
exercise or temperance. Medicines are indeed absolutely necessary in acute

*See Note C
distempers, that cannot wait the slow operations of these two great instruments of health; but did men live in a habitual course of exercise and temperance, there would be but little occasion for them. Accordingly, we find that those parts of the world are the most healthy where they subsist by the chase; and that men lived longest when their lives were employed in hunting, and when they had little food besides what they caught. Blistering, cupping, bleeding, are seldom of use but to the idle and intemperate; as all those inward applications which are so much in practice among us, are for the most part nothing else but expedients to make luxury consistent with health. The apothecary is perpetually employed in countermining the cook and the vintner. It is said of Diogenes, that, meeting a young man who was going to a feast, he took him up in the street and carried him home to his friends, as one who was running into imminent danger, had not he prevented him. What would that philosopher have said, had he been present at the gluttony of a modern meal? Would not he have thought the master of a family mad, and have begged his servants to tie down his hands, had he seen him devour fowl, fish, and flesh; swallow oil and vinegar, wines and spices; throw down salads of twenty different herbs, sauces of a hundred ingredients, confections and fruits of numberless sweets and flavors? What unnatural motions and counter-ferments must such a medley of intemperance produce in the body! For my part, when I behold a fashionable table set out in all its magnificence, I fancy that I see gouts and dropsies, fevers and lethargies, with other innumerable distempers, lying in ambuscade among the dishes.

Nature delights in the most plain and simple diet. Every animal, but man, keeps to one dish. Herbs are the food of this species, fish of that, and flesh of a third. Man falls upon everything that comes in his way; not the smallest fruit or excrescence of the earth, scarce a berry or a mushroom, can escape him.

It is impossible to lay down any determinate rule for temperance; because what is luxury in one may be temperance in another. But there are few that have lived any time in the world, who are not judges of their own constitutions, so far as to know what kinds and what proportions of food do best agree with them. Were I to consider my readers as my patients, and to prescribe such a kind of temperance as is accommodated to all persons, and such as is particularly suitable to our climate and way of living, I would copy the following rules of a very eminent physician: Make your whole repast out of one dish; if you indulge in a second, avoid drinking anything strong till you have finished your meal; at the same time abstain from all sauces, or at least such as are not the most plain and simple. A man could not be well guilty of gluttony, if he stuck to these few obvious and easy rules. In the first case, there would be no variety of tastes to solicit his palate, and occasion excess; nor, in
the second, any artificial provocatives to relieve satiety, and create a false appetite. . . . But, because it is impossible for one who lives in the world to diet himself always in so philosophical a manner, I think every man should have his days of abstinence, according as his constitution will permit. These are great reliefs to nature, as they qualify her for struggling with hunger and thirst, whenever any distemper or duty of life may put her upon such difficulties; and at the same time give her an opportunity of extricating herself from her oppressions, and recovering the several tones and springs of her distended vessels. Besides that, abstinence well-timed often kills a sickness in embryo, and destroys the first seeds of an indisposition. It is observed by two or three ancient authors, that Socrates, notwithstanding he lived in Athens during that great plague, which has made so much noise through all ages, and has been celebrated at different times by such eminent hands; I say, notwithstanding that he lived in the time of this devouring pestilence, he never caught the least infection; which those writers unanimously ascribe to that uninterrupted temperance which he always observed.

And here I cannot but mention an observation which I have often made, upon reading the lives of the philosophers, and comparing them with any series of kings or great men of the same number. If we consider these ancient sages, a great part of whose philosophy consisted in a temperate and abstemious course of life, one would think the life of a philosopher and the life of a man were of two different dates. For we find that the generality of these wise men were nearer a hundred than sixty years of age at the time of their respective deaths. But the most remarkable instance of the efficacy of temperance toward the procuring of long life, is what we meet with in a little book published by Louis Cornaro the Venetian; which I the rather mention, because it is of undoubted credit, as the late Venetian ambassador, who was of the same family, attested more than once in conversation, when he resided in England. Cornaro, who was the author of the little "Treatise" I am mentioning, was of an infirm constitution, till about forty; when, by obstinately persisting in an exact course of temperance, he recovered a perfect state of health; insomuch that at fourscore he published his book, which has been translated into English under the title of "A Sure and Certain Method of Attaining a Long and Healthy Life." He lived to give a third or fourth edition of it; and, after having passed his hundredth year, died without pain or agony, and like one who falls asleep. The "Treatise" I mention has been taken notice of by several eminent authors, and is written with such a spirit of cheerfulness, religion, and good sense, as are the natural concomitants of temperance and sobriety. The mixture of the old man in it is rather a recommendation than a discredit to it.

—JOSEPH ADDISON IN THE SPECTATOR, October 13, 1711.
Introduction to the New Edition

BY

GERALD J. GRUMAN

RENAISSANCE PATHS TO PROLONGEVITY:
CORNARO AND BACON

The purpose of this introduction is to present new interpretations of the achievements of Luigi Cornaro and Francis Bacon, two of the most significant individuals in the history of ideas about aging. Both were members of the rising "new class" in early modern Europe; both were strongly talented in several fields and specially gifted as writers. Although not physicians, they were motivated by values of Renaissance Christian humanism to write challenging works about the prolongation of life which greatly influenced gerontology.

In this introduction, I shall attempt to demonstrate that certain of the viewpoints of Cornaro and Bacon about aging and longevity are of major relevance to present-day dilemmas in biomedicine and political economics. Moreover, important historical relationships will be delineated between their conceptual schemes and the rise of modern biomedicine and the early modern economic revolution. Particular emphasis will be given to Bacon's insights into biological processes of senescence and renewal and his prevision of the economics of growth. Also the humanist attitudes of Cornaro and Bacon will be reviewed in terms of such issues in gerontology as the psychosocial role of the older person, the social costs and allocations for an aging population and the goals of medical research and treatment.
By way of introduction, some essential facts about our personages can be presented. Cornaro lived from 1484 to 1566 in Padua on the mainland, or Terrafirma, of the Venetian empire. His given name was Alvise or, in Italian, Luigi, his last name also listed as Corner. In 1558, he published a Trattato de la Vita Sobria which, with later essays, became the Discorsi. This work became a classic of hygiene and autobiography, passed through scores of translations and editions and reached its greatest popularity during the nineteenth century. In Jacob Burckhardt’s landmark 1860 study, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, Cornaro was hailed as the “one man who was both worthy and happy.” On the other hand, Burckhardt’s one-time student Friedrich Nietzsche, in his Twilight of the Idols in 1889, lashed out at the “Cornarism” of the bourgeois establishment, which he termed one of the “great evils” of the Victorian effort to manage and improve everyday life.

Recent work by Italian historians has made it clear that Cornaro was not only the author praised and blamed in the latter 19th century for a single book but was also one of the great, many-faceted creative figures of the North Italian Renaissance. In the light of these studies, Cornaro now looms as a significant, large-scale agrarian capitalist who applied the new science and technology of hydraulics in land-reclamation projects and in the construction of canals and lagoons. In the arts, Cornaro is counted an important patron of the kind of theatre that culminated in the influential commedia dell’arte. And, as a writer and practitioner in architecture, Cornaro made possible the Palladian style that was to become the fashion in England and America.

Turning to Francis Bacon, his life was passed in London between 1561 and 1626. His father served as Lord Chancellor and his uncle as Lord Treasurer to Elizabeth I, and Bacon himself was trained in the law and rose for a time to be Lord Chancellor to James I. Bacon’s major expositions concerning the prolongation of life appeared in The Advancement of Learning in 1605, in the Historia Vitae et Mortis in 1623, and in the New Atlantis in 1626. The time of Bacon was a generation or two after Cornaro. In the world economy, hegemony was shifting, during Cornaro’s lifetime, from Venice to Antwerp and Amsterdam, and in Bacon’s era, London was rising to preeminence. However, the prestige of Venice remained high, and England tended to identify itself with that earlier island empire.

In this introduction, the concepts of Cornaro and Bacon about longevity will be examined under the following headings:

1. The cumulative advantages of added years
2. The idealization of old age
3. The gerontology of ultimate concern
4. The rise of modern biomedicine and political economics
A few preliminary definitions should be given. "Prolongevity" means here the belief that it is possible and desirable to increase significantly the length of life by natural means. "Life expectancy" refers to the average longevity of a particular population; e.g., for newborns in the United States, about 75 years; for persons of 65, about 15 years. "Life span" denotes an apparent upper limit attainable by a few individuals of a particular species; e.g., for Homo sapiens, about 114 years. "Meliorism" is used here to connote consistent ethical effort toward betterment of human conditions. "Mercantilism" is taken in the general sense of the capitalist political economy of early modern Europe, usually directed to the interests and power of the state.

THE CUMULATIVE ADVANTAGES OF ADDED YEARS

Cornaro's *Vita Sobria* was centered on his own dramatic life story, recounting how, between 35 and 40, he suffered a mid-life crisis in which his health so deteriorated that death seemed imminent. In a leap of faith, he adopted a strict hygienic regimen, struggled to physical recovery and, in brief, became rich and famous. Closely tied to this narrative of upward mobility was Cornaro's argument that extra years give one a decided advantage in gaining knowledge, wisdom and honors. It is not surprising that this cumulative model of aging caught the attention of the new European class engaged in the persevering collection of wealth and status. And Cornaro added a religious sanction, "Live, live, that you may become better servants of God!"

Cornaro's method for accumulating years was his self-managed way of life, defined variously as temperate, orderly and regular. The rather insistent central theme was diet: to eat only enough to sustain life and to choose foods not by taste but for health. These nutritional rules required close observation, so that, by the age of 45, the individual would be his own best physician. Recommending also the avoidance generally of physical and emotional excess, Cornaro reasoned that the preservation of the balance of the bodily "humours" would make one immune to disease, just as an orderly city-state remains secure and prosperous. Cornaro associated his regimen with the need for both personal and social reforms to save Venice, Italy and the Church from growing external and internal threats.

Like Cornaro, Francis Bacon too believed that extra years were most welcome; he referred to increased longevity as "of earthly gifts perhaps the greatest," and he chided physicians for neglecting the prolongation of life. At the beginning of the *Historia*, he placed the Hippocratic maxim, "Life is short but art is long," and elsewhere he asserted "truth is the
daughter of Time." And he too presented a justification of longer life in terms of good works. However, he was much more anxious than Cornaro about his own ambitious but uneven career; he identified his greatest enemy as "fear itself," and he wrote trenchant critiques of pessimism and despair. Bacon tended to see his life as a hazardous pilgrimage in which his intellectual role was that of an elect witness.

Regarding the means for long life, Bacon called attention to "Cornaro of Venice" who "ate and drank by exact weight, whereby he exceeded 100 years of age, with his strength and senses unimpaired." But where Cornaro's method was clear and simple, Bacon's regimen was as complicated as a Tudor legislative code. His involved lists of guidelines, with their numerous conditional stipulations, recall William Harvey's remark that Bacon did medicine "like a Lord Chancellor." It remained for the medical chemists, later in the 17th century, to select and put to good use certain of the hints in Bacon's tentative, encyclopedic regimen.

IDEALIZATION OF OLD AGE

In Cicero's defense of old age, in the famous De senectute, the ideal old person was the flinty, austere elder statesman Cato. Cornaro went quite beyond that Stoic approach by declaring, in the Vita Sobria, that old age is "the most beautiful period of life." As proof, Cornaro characteristically reported his own abilities and enjoyments at a stated age of 81. Jacob Burckhardt awarded a laurel of "classical perfection" in style to these glowing accounts by Cornaro of his physical agility, his large family, his circle of literati and especially his aesthetic sensibilities:

In the spring and autumn I ... make the acquaintance of other distinguished men, architects, painters, sculptors, musicians...I see palaces, gardens, antiquities....But what most of all delights me when I travel, is the beauty of the country and the places, lying now on the plain, now on the slopes of the hills, or on the banks of rivers and streams, surrounded by gardens and villas.

The conclusion was that after 65, or even 80, experience is not the reputed "living death" (vita morte) but a truly vita viva. And this Arcadian hedonism was reinforced by the neo-Platonic mysticism of Cornaro's friend, Cardinal Bembo, in which the elder increasingly senses the divine love and beauty that permeates the world. Thus, currents of ancient neo-Platonism revived and transformed in the Renaissance contributed to Cornaro's vision of an attractive old age.
In addition to his own example, Cornaro named a number of distinguished, long-lived persons in the church and state and also from Biblical and Classical sources. In light of the simple and accessible nature of his own regimen, he deemed some 100 to 120 years to be now open to all—both rich and poor, women and men.

Like Cornaro, Bacon also was inclined to idealize old age. A model elder, for him, was the patriarchal magister-teacher of the New Atlantis, personally instructing apprentice-like "sons." Such a picture recalled Old Testament and Christian Fathers and the philosopher-king of Plato, and it prefigured the recurring modern theme of "fathers and sons." In his own later years, Bacon saw himself as transcending a tragic situation as an inspired magister resolutely initiating a useful and noble philosophy. Always tending to poor health, Bacon in his forties already looked worn and old. His last years differed markedly from the serene good health of Cornaro. From 60 to 65, Bacon resorted to Cicero's Stoicism and the Psalms of David to counter the depressing effects of illness and loneliness, while he entrusted to history and posterity the implementation of his "Great Instauration." It must be mentioned here that Bacon also differed somewhat from Cornaro in his more pronounced emphasis on the patriarchal role and masculine values generally. This does not mean that he was indifferent to the fate of women; in the New Atlantis, for example, he spoke with intensity and idealism about bettering the relationship between the sexes.

In Bacon's representation of history, one can see too his positive valuation of age. In the debate between "Ancients" and "Moderns," he clearly was in the latter camp. Bacon equated modern times with old age, and antiquity he correlated with the youth of humankind. In his view, it was the modern era that had the greater possibilities for growth and development—for progress. Thus, Bacon favored the cumulative knowledge, wisdom and resources of age—and its potentialities—far more than the qualities of youth. In his recognition of intrinsic, progressive attributes of the elderly, Bacon was unusual and, to some extent, ahead of our contemporary society.

As Cornaro did, Bacon referred to examples of very long-lived persons, and he expanded this kind of data from history and geography into a crowded section of the Historia. But Bacon did not set any specific chronological goal; the matter was left open to the enterprise of future experimental science. In Renaissance medicine, aging was perceived in two differing ways. "Accidental" (or pathological) aging seemed to be comparable to disease processes and was, to some extent, subject to medical intervention. But it was "essential" (or biological), seemingly ordained in its course and invulnerable to usual medical procedures, that was the central interest and challenge to Bacon. In envisioning such
a profound ameliorative undertaking, he scorned the notion that some magical cure or secret elixir might be near at hand. Nor did he desire "rejuvenation," in the sense of a return to an early youthful stage. What Bacon sought was long-term scientific effort to enable renewal of vigor and flexibility in the elderly, while retaining the cumulative material and intellectual advantages of age.

**THE GERONTOLOGY OF ULTIMATE CONCERN**

Both Cornaro and Bacon had religious or numinous concerns and experience of mysticism. As we have noted, Cornaro's prolongevity scheme was bolstered by the neo-Platonist transcendence of the Cardinal Bembo. Moreover, Cornaro fashioned an optimistic concept of "natural" death that was based on Aristotelian thought. Aristotle had used a lamp analogy to picture two kinds of death. In death by "extinction," the flame of life was put out violently by trauma or acute disease. In death by "exhaustion," the oil of the lamp became depleted by age or chronic illness, and the flame gradually ceased, in accord with the "ways of nature." Cornaro combined this idea of "natural" death with Galen's system of hygiene, based on maintaining an appropriate balance between the four bodily humours. Within the body, there was a hypothetical vital principle, termed the "radical" humour or moisture, which ruled over the mix of humours.

Cornaro assumed that his regimen preserved the radical moisture from premature or wasteful expenditure and sustained a favorable humoral balance. With extended life, the radical moisture would be used up little by little; such a process would be gentle and lead to an easy "natural" death—a kind of euthanasia. Cornaro's pastoralist identification with a benevolent nature was reinforced by devout faith in merciful intervention by the Saviour. At times, he envisioned an easy passage from a happy earthly life to the superior joys of heaven.

But Cornaro's terrestrial achievements also were imbued with other, rather different, numinous overtones; as he stated,

... an arm of the Brenta (river near Padua) flows through the plantations—fruitful, well-cultivated fields, now fully peopled, which the marshes and the foul air once made fitter for snakes than for men. It was I who drained the country; then the air became good, and people settled there and multiplied, and the land became cultivated as it now is, so that I can truly say: "On this spot I gave to God an altar and a temple, and souls to worship Him."

This is a humanistic meliorism that brings to mind the conclusion of Goethe's *Faust*. In addition to this, secular fulfillment, for Cornaro, took
on an aura of evident election as a chosen one of God—a prevision of Puritan reverence for the elite elderly.

In contrast to Cornaro, Bacon did not hold out hopes of any proximate easy or natural death. Bacon comprehended euthanasia as a matter of beneficent intervention by enlightened physicians to ease the sufferings of terminal patients. Along with the prolongation of life, Bacon pointed to euthanasia as a meaningful subject that was being neglected by the medical profession. He believed that the secrets of agonized natural death were to be discovered and utilized for the attainment of a more humane death.

One characteristic that Bacon did have in common with Cornaro was aesthetic sensibility. But where Cornaro delighted in the visual arts and landscape, Bacon's formidable artistic insights and abilities were verbal and poetic. Bacon's imagery, as Shelley asserted, "bursts the circumference of the reader's mind, and pours itself forth into the universal element with which it has perpetual sympathy." The visionary aspect of Bacon's aesthetic was to find expression in the late 18th century writings of the German nationalist physician Christopher Wilhelm Hufeland, who in 1797 published his *Makrobiotik*, an influential work inspired by Bacon's *Historia Vitae et Mortis* and held together, in the context of romantic Nature Philosophy, by a speculative vital principle allied with animal magnetism and electricity. Contemporary with Hufeland were the endeavors of the romantic poet-scientist Novalis, who attempted to fashion a "magic idealism" combining Christianity, biomedicine and the literary imagination to gain control over the "poetry of life." "Magic idealism" was to have fruitful interactions with empirical and experimental science, especially in organic and medical chemistry (as in Kekulé's benzene ring and Ehrlich's "magic bullet") down to the double helix and molecular medicine. In analyzing the place of imagination in Baconian philosophy, one must not overlook his love of words, codes and cryptography.

The numinous traits of Francis Bacon, this "wisest, meanest" man attracted him to a compassionate standpoint akin to the Biblical Isaiah and Matthew. Perhaps his visions of divine love and truth in the unfolding pattern of history were as compelling as those of Cornaro in contemplating architecture or natural beauty. Although Bacon's life was one of driving ambition for power and place, in his prophetic writings he portrayed a caritas that he admired. The high magister of the *New Atlantis* was an almost Christlike figure with a pitying eye and a "great heart" for the amelioration of the ignorance and sufferings of humanity.

In Charles Webster's pathfinding book, *The Great Instauration*, one can read the record, in the chapter on "prolongation of life," of 17th century Puritan applications of Bacon's philosophy in terms of medical reform.
and public health. But the Christian humanism of Bacon was broader than Puritanism. In the late 18th century, the vision and burden of Baconian meliorism found radical expression in a secular religion of progress. The French revolutionary mathematician Condorcet, in his *Tableau Historique des Progrès de L'esprit Humaine* in 1795, foresaw an indefinite increase in human longevity, approaching but never reaching immortality. The social-ethical implications of such a projected scientific transformation were discussed by Condorcet in his *Reflections on the New Atlantis*. In the late 19th century, a radical Christian version of Baconian meliorism was formulated by Nicholas Fyodorov, an eminent Russian Orthodox scholar and prophet, whose views of a scientific conquest of space and time were set forth in his book *The Philosophy of the Common Task*. It may be noted that Fyodorov, as a Baconian magister, adopted and educated a deaf boy, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, who later founded the Soviet space program. In regard to death, the philosophy of Fyodorov went beyond Bacon in discussing, in terms of science, both immortality and resurrection.

**THE RISE OF MODERN BIOMEDICINE AND POLITICAL ECONOMICS**

The important place of Cornaro in the rise of early modern biomedicine generally has been overlooked. I believe there is, for example, considerable evidence connecting Cornaro with the great medical school at the University of Padua—an institution associated with the work of Vesalius and Harvey, Copernicus and Galileo. The important role of Paduan inductive Aristotelianism in the scientific revolution is well-known. Walter Pagel traced this aspect of Harvey’s thought back to his studies at Padua and cited Jacob Zabarella as the leading advocate of this approach. The teacher of Zabarella, and his predecessor in the chair of philosophy, was the physician Bernardino Tomitano. John Herman Randall named Tomitano as the key person in interpreting the logical analytical method of Aristotle in a way that contributed to inductive empiricism. As it happens, it was Tomitano who wrote the introduction to Cornaro’s *Vita Sobria*, justifying the publication of a medical work by a nonphysician. The gist of this preface was that careful, systematic observation and testing, even by a layman, could be insightful and useful. Other Paduan medical graduates directly involved with the *Vita Sobria* were Daniele Barbaro and Sperone Speroni, both of whom had been on the medical faculty.

Also little recognized, has been the relationship between Cornaro and the medical physicists, one of the major lines of thought in the evolution
of early modern medicine. The structure and imagery of the *Vita Sobria* are suggestive of this important linkage. Beginning with the words, "certain it is" (*Certa cosa è*), Cornaro set forth a series of equationlike interchanges between force and time, gain and loss and excess and equilibrium. It is a neoclassic text with something of the dynamic of early mannerism, and, thus, it calls to mind the style of the famous Villa Rotonda of Palladio. The *Vita Sobria* was cited and commented on in the writings of the iatro-physical school, founded at Padua by Santorio and continued by Baglivi. The medical physicists tried, with some success, as in Santorio's *Statici Medici*, to emulate Galileo in furthering experimental methods in biomedicine.

Cornaro also had strong influences on early gerontology in regard to concepts of longevity, and his dietary regimen continues to have repercussions at the present time. Elsewhere, I have traced the Cornaro tradition of individual hygiene and the credulity that continued to exist about persons living beyond 100 or 150 years, i.e., the "supercentenarians." A celebrated example of this phenomenon was the Englishman Thomas Parr, whose alleged longevity gained him a hero's interment in Westminster Abbey. The autopsy on Parr was done by the renowned William Harvey himself, who concluded that his countryman actually had died prematurely at the age of nearly 153 years. The view that human longevity extended as far as 200 years was continued and developed by Albrecht von Haller and by Hufeland, but, in the latter 19th century, primitivist and supercentenarian hygiene were subjected to effective criticism by historians and biostatisticians. And, in recent decades, Italian historians have downgraded Cornaro's lifetime from that of the legendary "Venetian Centenarian" to about 82 years (1484-1566).

However, the nutritional insights of Cornaro have continued to be of real interest in modern scientific gerontology. In 1934, Clive M. McCay, one of the founders of the Gerontological Society of America, began to report on a series of significant studies on underfeeding in laboratory animals that led him to speculate that not only life expectancy but also life span might be subject to biomedical extension. Roy Walford and his followers have continued to hold to a similar viewpoint in recent years. And, in the last 10 years, a remarkable sequence of laboratory experiments has suggested that "food restriction" not only increases life expectancy and life span in the relevant species but also protects animals against age-associated diseases and physiological changes and retards the essential aging process itself. Therefore, while the ideas of Cornaro about his own length of life appear to have been exaggerated, it remains possible that some of his claims for the benefits of stringent diet may yet be vindicated.

Bacon's prolongevity hypotheses played a still greater role than Cornaro's in the rise of modern biomedicine. Such institutions as the National
Institute on Aging are in a line of descent from “Solomon’s House” described in the New Atlantis, and the daring experiments outlined in that book prefigured the interventionist medicine of the 20th century. In particular, Bacon’s philosophy soon found bold applications in blood transfusion, in the 17th century, and in resuscitation techniques and experiments in low-temperature biology, in the 18th century. Those developments followed the conscious efforts of Bacon to remove traditional taboos around aging and mortality.

Although he was deficient in some clinical matters and failed to avail himself of Harveian physiology, Bacon’s insights in biomedicine were remarkably penetrating. For one thing, he broke with the traditional humoralism reflected in Cornaro and instead championed the localized, “solidist” physiology and pathology so important for the biomedical revolution. Thus, he replaced the concept of a central “radical moisture” with a multiplicity of “spirits” situated out in the various parts and organs of the body, and he urged systematic post-mortem dissections to trace the localized “footprints and impressions of disease.” Bacon postulated similar spirits in all natural substances, and he recommended organized, sustained identification of their therapeutic properties and compilation of their specific effects in diverse ills. His tentative encyclopedic stance was suitable to the observational and individualistic school of English neo-Hippocratic medicine, personified by Thomas Sydenham and the philosopher-physician John Locke. In fact, it was Sydenham, the “English Hippocrates,” who began a fateful classification of species and genera of disease along the lines of natural history. All these Baconian trends, along with vital statistics, were basic to the great Paris school of 19th century medicine founded by disciplines of Condorcet.

Turning to the Historia Vitae et Mortis, let us focus on the introduction, which, although brief, is of far-reaching importance. Bacon began this classic prolegomenon by distinguishing accidental (or pathological) from essential (or biological) aging and declaring that his business was with the latter. In the brilliant third paragraph of this prefatory essay, Bacon stated, “Whatever can be repaired gradually without destroying the original whole is, like the vestal fire, potentially eternal.” He then criticized the customary assumption that the organism begins life with a limited quantity of a God-given radical moisture that, by its very nature, cannot be “repaired,” and therefore, is doomed over time to extinction or exhaustion. To combat this “medical mortalism,” which so limited reparation, Bacon referred to the dynamic forces observed in human growth and development by asserting that, “in the time of growth and youth, all the parts of animals are repaired entirely; nay, for a time they are increased in quantity and bettered in quality, so that the matter whereby they are repaired would be eternal, if the manner of repairing them did not fail.”
This appeal by Bacon to the example of early life challenged the traditional norm of biomedicine—the mature adult plateau of years between the clumsy climb of childhood and the repellant decline of senescence. It was this adult phase, with its capacity for work, combat and reproduction, that intrigued rulers, employers and philosophers. In defiance of that traditional conceptual scheme, Bacon linked the body’s work-a-day processes of reparation to the powerfully creative forces that operate in growth and development. Such wondrous biological properties can be observed too in wound healing, the regeneration of lost substances or tissues and the struggle of the body against disease. These mighty potencies were compared to the regenerative forces of Christian salvation, symbolized by the ordinary mustard seed and the transforming miracle of fermentation in bread and wine.

It should be noted that at the time Bacon wrote about human growth and development and reparative potentialities, William Harvey was studying the elaboration of the embryo and beginning the move away from the traditional theory of preformation to the unfolding, organic transformation of epigenesis. The triumph of epigenetic embryology in the 18th and 19th centuries was to be paralleled by dynamic theories of the evolution of species (instead of the traditional one-time creation) and by historical interpretations of human culture in terms of evolving stages of maturation.

In the introduction to the Historia, in the crucial third paragraph, Bacon also presented a rationale for scientific intervention against aging. This was based on the inference that organic processes of change take place in an uneven manner; as he put it, “even after the decline of age the spirit, blood, flesh, and fat are still easily repaired.” But the structural elements, such as bone and connective tissue and “nearly all the organic parts,” were considered by Bacon to be only “repaired with difficulty and loss” and hence fall into decay. Since the organs are the chief agents of repair, in Bacon’s scheme, the failure of the body to keep them in condition condemns the entire organism. Comparing the “animal economy” to the “political economy,” Bacon stated that the deprivations of aging “destroy the workshop of the body with its machines and organs, and make them incapable of performing the work of repair.” This passage lends itself to solidist physiology and also has affinities to the iatro-physics of Baglivi, who repeatedly used the machine-organ correlation. But the most absorbing relationship here is to issues in the political economy of Bacon’s era.

A key link between early modern medicine and political economy was the demography of health and longevity. It was the Venetian mercantile system that first put to use vital statistics. The Vita Sobria had its numerical mensuration of chronology and nutriment, and Cornaro’s
reclamation projects aimed to recoup Venetian losses overseas by bringing into existence on the mainland a healthful and productive population. Such demographic visions were advanced by Bacon's doctrines and stimulated the biostatistical work of Petty and Graunt as well as mercantilist ventures in public health. The grand purpose of this 17th and 18th century "political arithmetic" and "medical police" was the assurance of a methodical demographic process of generational succession from birth to death, with the least possible waste or disruption.

The norm in mercantilist economic demography was the traditional one—the mature adult stage of life with its endowments suitable for the labor, military and fertility needs of society. The main difference from tradition in this arrangement was that this "interesting" population sector was to be processed and utilized for profit in a rationalized and efficient way, like any other natural resource. This kind of viewpoint became standardized in the positivist and corporate-capitalist national societies of the latter 19th century and, to a considerable extent, continues today. As Hannah Arendt concluded in *The Human Condition*, such a system is not concerned with prolonging life for the individual but is preoccupied with the continuance of state and corporate entities, and, to some extent, the human species *per se*. On this generational conveyor belt, individual life centers on the socially redeeming 25 or 30 years of greatest productive value, which are followed by displacement and general cultural indifference. Prolongevity appears episodically as one of the hopeful narcotic-like themes of the mass media, which also contribute an aura of sentimentality to the role of old age. The last stage of life is defined, in the sociology of Talcott Parsons and psychology of Erik Erikson, as a time of smooth, disengaged renunciation.

Victor Hugo once asked, "Take away 'time is money' and what is left of England?" Cornaro and Bacon had envisioned something beyond that work-ethic "iron cage," and their Christian humanist values have been called on by gerontologists to fend off modern varieties of ageism. The prolongevity thought of Bacon is of particular moment here, because he came close to positing an open-ended model of longer life—a transition from "life cycle" to "life course," with physical renewal of the old as a key goal. In this context, certain inner conflicts in Bacon's conjectures become evident. If, in some places, his writings hinted at indefinitely renewed life, he also reverted, at other points, to the customary, stereotyped character traits and social roles of the life cycle. Similarly, Bacon was not able to break away completely from the political-economic limits of the mercantilism of Gresham's epoch. His experience, like that of his father and his uncle, was shaped by his position as a privileged aristocrat directing a strategy for the aggrandizement of the monarchical state in an economy of scarcity. It is Bacon who still is associated with
the term "balance of trade" and the central dictum of competitive mercantilism "whatever is somewhere gained is somewhere else lost."

However, as in his ideas of longevity, Bacon's discussion of economics did manifest efforts to transcend the intrinsic, traditional limitations. While he continued to be suspicious of large-scale banking and joint-stock companies, he did call for the systematic loosening of credit to encourage expansion in trade and industry. He clearly appreciated the potentialities of what he called the "above ground mines" of the Netherlands with their flourishing commerce and enterprising population. Bacon did show a glaring lack of appreciation for inventions in the methodology of the economic revolution; for example, double-entry bookkeeping, giro banking and price discounting. However, he did use an intriguing financial metaphor in his discussion of reforms in philosophical procedure, referring to the "mint of knowledge," in which "words are the tokens current and accepted for conceits (ideas), as monies are for values," and he added that, "it is fit men be not ignorant that monies may be of another kind than gold and silver." This calls to mind the increasing use, in Bacon's time, of paper types of money, such as notes of exchange, that were beginning to ease transactions over time and space.

In the New Atlantis, the population were depicted as above the demeaning constraints of poverty, and, in the Essays, when he compared the factors of natural resources, manufacturing and trade, his conclusion was that, "if these three wheels go, wealth will flow as in a spring tide." Thus, Bacon, amid the bustle of mercantile and colonial expansion, caught glimpses of an economic stage in which sustained growth would be the normal condition.

In our own time, life expectancy has become one of the measures of the standard of living, and one can see such charts in textbooks of economic history next to those for automobile ownership per family or, more important, per capita Gross National Product (GNP). Indeed, an extended longevity often is cited as a legitimation of a system or nation. Yet the fact is that no regime ever has seriously tried to prolong life in the sense proposed by Cornaro, Bacon or Condorcet. Generally, an aging population has been a by-product of campaigns against infant mortality and the ills of early and middle life—part of the demographic structuring for productivity and "high mass consumption" of goods.

Whether it was wanted or not, the aging population is demographically present, and with it, there are major biomedical and political-economic decisions to be made. In 1987, Daniel Callahan's Setting Limits: Medical Goals in an Aging Society stated that his nation's resources are limited and should go preferentially to the young and productive. The elderly are categorized in the book, as essentially expensive, unhappy
and not mourned at death. Callahan speculates about a socially deter-
mined termination age, somewhere in the later seventies, at which pub-
lic expenditure largely is to be withheld. Not surprisingly, the author
criticized the ideas of both Cornaro and Bacon.

The problems raised in the book by Callahan are real and pressing
ones. For the first time, it is not only in the younger age groups that life
expectancy is increasing but also in the age groups that Cornaro dis-
cussed—those over 65, or even 80. A phenomenon of that sort brings to
the fore the question of biological, or essential, aging that was of central
interest to Bacon. A philosopher of biomedicine, Arthur L. Caplan, has
asked in a cogent 1980 paper, “Is Aging a Disease?” and indicated a
largely affirmative answer. It would seem that at least in such disease
entities as hypertension, osteoporosis, much of cancer, atherosclerosis
and Alzheimer’s disease—all part of biological senescence not long ago—
gerontology and biomedicine are blending into one another.

This aging of biomedicine has been occurring in a period of increas-
ing political and economic constraint, for, in the advanced industrial
nations since 1973, the rate of increase in productivity has leveled out or
fallen. Where are the resources and the dynamism to come from to re-
solve these dilemmas in the direction of humanistic and melioristic
progress? Economic historians have not been unaware of such questions
about past and future growth and development. Thus, in 1960, Walt W.
Rostow of MIT sketched a history of The Stages of Economic Growth. De-
spite the Cold War polemics that infused his interpretation, Rostow iden-
tified usefully, in the context of modernization theory, several key stages
of development in the transition from economic scarcity to abundance.
And in the 1970s, Fernand Braudel filled in some of the historical detail
about the phase that Rostow had characterized breezily as the “take off,”
and the French historian even attempted to make estimates of the GNP
and PCI (per capita income) for specified early chronological periods in
Venetian and English development.

In 1960s politics, issues of economic growth attracted general atten-
tion when the United States adopted a policy that battled against pover-
ty in the name of the “Great Society.” This program brought increased
relevance to the “discovery of abundance” (D.M. Fox): the systematic
argument that an abundant society was possible and desirable, set forth
in 1907, in The New Basis of Civilization, by Simon Patten of the Wharton
School of Business. One of the articulate proponents of the Great Society
was Robert Solow, the MIT economist, who in 1987 was awarded the
Nobel Prize in economics. Solow was honored for working out the com-
plex equations that demonstrated mathematically, for the first time, that
increased expenditures for technology and education really do lead to
increased productivity. Asked if his findings were equivalent to the ax-
iom of Francis Bacon that "knowledge is power," he replied, "knowledge is productivity." Some of the implications of the latter statement were spelled out in Solow's succinct book, *Growth Theory* (1970), the aim of which was to contribute to the construction of economic models useful to society's approach, as closely as possible, to sustained exponential economic growth. It is noteworthy that the kind of geometric curve pictured by Solow's inquiry into economic growth is so similar to the graphic arc envisioned by Condorcet to express the indefinite future increase of longevity.

In conclusion, I have attempted to describe the major ideas of Cornaro and Bacon about aging, how their paths to increased longevity were related to the medical and social imperatives of their time, and how they diverged from each other. Some of Cornaro's viewpoints and many of Bacon's continue, I believe, to remain relevant. Thus, in facing the late 20th century's dilemmas about the biomedical revolution, the aging population and problems of economic growth, one may well recall the maxim of Francis Bacon, "the improvement of man's lot and the improvement of man's mind are one and the same thing."
'Tis in ourselves that we are thus or thus. Our bodies are gardens; to the which our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles or sow lettuce, set hyssop and weed up thyme, supply it with one gender of herbs or distract it with many, either to have it sterile with idleness or manured with industry, why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason to cool our raging motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts.

—Othello.
A Short Account of

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

LOUIS CORNARO

TO LOUIS CORNARO

FROM THE ITALIAN OF HIERONIMO GUALDO (CIRCA 1560)
DONE INTO ENGLISH VERSE BY
JOHN GOADBY GREGORY

I

Sir, well may Fame to you accord the praise
That, spite of adverse stars and nature's strife,
Solely by measured conduct of your life,
Healthy and happy you gained length of days.
Nor stops approval there, but also weighs
The pains you spared not to set others right,
Guiding their footsteps by your beacon-light
To long and pleasant journeying through life's maze.
Blest is your lot, who, with a steadfast mind,
Beneath a load of years which many fear,
Contented and felicitous abide,
Your voice in song upraised robust and clear,
Your thoughts with noble studies occupied.
That good is yours which is for man designed.

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II

"Weary and woeful is senectitude
E’en when from penury and aches ’tis free,"
Cries one, “for that it brings debility,
And warns us of the grisly monarch rude.”
Yet he who holds in rein his passions crude,
Nor rends the blossoms from life’s growing tree,
Gathers in age fruits sweet and fair to see,
For Nature is with purpose kind endued.
If I, now years come on, am weak and ill,
Not time, but I, am cause of this my woe.
Too much I heeded headlong appetite.
And though to save the wreck I bend my will,
’Tis vain, I fear—I ever older grow;
And aged error is not soon set right.

III

In hermit caverns, where the desert glowers,
The ancient Fathers lived on frugal fare—
Roots, cresses, herbs—avoiding viands rare,
Nor had they palates less refined than ours.
From their example, confirmation flowers
Of what you tell me, and in mind I bear
That feasts which folly spreads on tables fair
Our frames enfeeble and reduce our powers.
The wish in man is native to remain
Long with the living, for to live is sweet.
His wish he may by abstinence attain.
Dame Reason counsels, sober and discreet,
This way that solid privilege to gain,
And tardy to the realm of shades retreat.

LOUIS CORNARO (ancient Venetian, Alvise; modern Italian, Luigi, Lodovico, or Ludovico),—often styled The Venetian Centenarian,—the author of the famous treatise, “The Temperate Life,” which forms the main portion of this volume, was born in the city of Venice in the year 1464.

Although a direct descendant of the illustrious family of Cornaro, yet, defrauded in some way through the dishonest intrigues of some of his relatives,—we are but imperfectly acquainted with the circumstances,—
he was deprived of the honors and privileges attached to his noble birth, and excluded from all public employment in the State. A man of great personal and family pride, he felt very keenly the humiliation of this treatment; and, as a consequence, he withdrew from his native place and made the city of Padua his home for the remainder of his life, save for brief seasons of summer retirement to his country-seats.

Yet that, which, at the time, must have seemed to him a great misfortune, proved eventually a blessing; and doubtless, during the long course of his remarkable career, Cornaro's philosophic mind often reverted with thankfulness to those very indignities, but for which, perhaps, he would never have received the chief incentive of his life; for may we not believe it was because of them that he resolved to found for himself a more honorable name—one that should rest upon a sounder and more worthy basis than mere family pride. This determination, whatever may have inspired it, proved, as we learn in his narrative, to be the crisis of his life, changing, as if by magic, its entire course; and it resulted in the establishment of a fame, not only great in his own day, but which continues to increase as time rolls on.

In order to accomplish the purpose uppermost in his mind, the first thing to which he gave his constant and most intelligent attention was the securing of perfect health, which heretofore he had never known, and which he recognized as the best armor for the warfare of life; a knowledge, the importance of which—in his day, as in ours—few fully realized. At the details of this glorious work, as well as its happy results, we shall here take only a hasty glance; for the picture he has painted is by the hand of a master, and no one but himself can do it justice.

Born with a very delicate constitution, accompanied unfortunately by a choleric disposition, Cornaro furthermore gave evidence, in early life, of careless habits which finally developed into those of intemperance; and, though destined to leave behind him a name imperishable, because of virtues based upon a complete subjugation of every passion, was almost destroyed, before he reached the age of forty, by those natural and acquired infirmities, which, for years, had made his days and nights an almost continual martyrdom.

Finally convinced that his unnatural habits would, if persisted in, soon be the cause of his death, and possessed of that determined courage and resolution, which, on a closer acquaintance, we shall recognize and learn to admire as his chief trait, he changed his manner of life so completely that, in a very brief time, his diseases disappeared, giving place to a rugged health and serenity of mind hitherto unknown to him. In a word, from a despairing and almost helpless invalid, unfit for either work or enjoyment, he became not only a man of perfect health, singularly
active and happy, but also such an example of complete self-restraint as to be the wonder and admiration of all who knew him, earning and receiving the title of The Temperate. The mildness and sweetness of his altered disposition at the same time gained for him the fullest respect and affection.

In the city of Udine, northern Italy, he married Veronica di Spilimbergo,* a daughter of the noble house of that name.

He very much desired children, not only for every natural reason, but also in order that his own offspring might inherit the large fortune which he possessed. Though for a long time disappointed in this hope, he was finally made very happy by the advent of a little daughter, born when he and his wife were both well advanced in years; to her they gave the name of Chiara (Clara).** In due time she was married to one of her own name and kindred, Giovanni (John), the son of Fantino Cornaro, a member of the wealthy and powerful Cornaro Piscopia branch of the family. She became the mother of eight sons and three daughters, all of whom the grandfather—as we learn from his own words—lived to see and enjoy.

Having faithfully observed that wise law of Nature, moderation, for so many years, he anticipated, with a confidence which the sequel will show was neither unfounded nor disappointed, a happy and prosperous life of not less than a century; and this span he was equally certain he would have been able to extend considerably, had it been his good fortune to have begun life with the advantages he assures us his teachings will confer on the children of all who lead the temperate life it had been his delight to follow.

To the very close of his wonderful career he retained his accustomed health and vigor, as well as the possession, in their perfection, of all his faculties. No hand but his own can faithfully give us an account of the recreations and pleasures of that happy old age for which he entreats all to strive. But we may sum it all up in the one brief line wherein he assures us: "I never knew the world was beautiful until I reached old age." Of the knowledge that his was an instance without a parallel, he himself was not ignorant. In this thought he not only took a pardonable pride, but derived one of the greatest joys of his old age, when he reflected that while many others before him had written eulogies upon a life of temperance and regularity, no one, at the end of a century of life, had ever taken pen in hand to leave to the world the story of a personal participation in the many indescribable blessings, which, for so many years, it had been his lot to enjoy; nor had any one, after recovering

*See Note D  **See Note C
broken health, lived to such an age to tell the world how he had done so.

The one thought uppermost in his heart was that of gratitude for his recovery, and for the countless blessings of his long life. This sentiment he hoped would ever continue to bear substantial fruit; for he lived and died in the belief that his labors in writing a faithful account of his experience, would result, for all time, in benefiting those who would listen to him. He was convinced that if he, who had begun life under so many disadvantages, could attain perfect health and continue in it for so many years, the possibilities of those blessed with a perfect constitution and aided, from childhood, with the temperate rule of life, must indeed be almost unlimited. It will be difficult to find anywhere recorded an instance wherein constitutional defects, aggravated by unwise habits of life, threatened a more untimely death; and if Cornaro, with a constitution naturally weak and apparently ruined at the age of forty, could attain such results, who will presume to set a limit to the possibilities of longevity for the human family, after consecutive generations have faithfully observed Nature’s wise laws?

Loaded with testimonials of the gratitude and reverence of many who had profited by his example and advice,—which knowledge of this benefit to others was, as he assures us, among the sweetest of his many blessings,—he passed the evening of his life honored by all, and in the enjoyment of the friendship and esteem of the most eminent of his countrymen. Having devoted his best years to the accomplishment of what he firmly believed to be his mission in this world,—a consecrated task, that of bringing home to his fellow-men the realization of the inevitable consequences of intemperance,—he patiently waited for the end. When death came, it found him armed with the resignation of the philosopher and a steadfastly courageous faith in the future, ready and glad to resign his life. Peacefully, as he had expected and foretold, he died at his palace in Padua, April 26, 1566, in the one hundred and third year of his age. (Historians have not agreed as to the year of his birth, some placing his age at one hundred and four, others as low as ninety-eight. The dates we have given are, however, substantiated by the best authorities.)

He was buried on the eighth of the following month, without any pomp, according to the directions left in his will; and by his side his faithful wife, who survived him and lived to almost the same age, in due time was laid. Her end was an equally happy one, finding her in such perfect serenity of soul and ease of body, that those at her bedside were not aware that her gentle spirit had taken its flight.

The beautiful home, built by Cornaro on the Via Melchiorre Cesarotti in Padua, and the scene, for so many years, of the greatest domestic
happiness as well as of the most generous hospitality, is still in existence, and has always been known by his name. It consists, mainly, of three buildings; the palace—which is the principal one—and the casino are both attributed to Cornaro himself; while the celebrated loggia is known as the work of his protégé and friend, Falconetto.* The three inclose a courtyard, upon which all face—the palace on one side near the street, the loggia and casino on other sides.

The best portrait extant of this justly celebrated man is catalogued as No. 83 in the famous gallery of the Pitti Palace, at Florence. It has, until recently, been considered one of Titian's paintings; but it is now known as the work of Tintoretto, and is among the masterpieces of that famous artist. The canvas measures 44x33 inches, and the photographic copy used in this work is declared by the Director of the Pitti Gallery to be an excellent one. The figure, two-thirds in length, is life size. Cornaro is represented as seated in an armchair, dressed in black, his coat trimmed with fur. Though the picture portrays a man well advanced in years, there is a dignity of bearing and a keenness of eye that indicate one still physically vigorous and mentally alert.

In other portions of this volume, some of the many attainments of this remarkable man are made manifest; we will here—with this passing mention of his treatise on the preservation of the lagoons ("Trattato delle Acque," Padua, 1560)—notice, very briefly, the writings for which he is chiefly known.

At the age of eighty-three, after more than forty years of perfect health and undisturbed tranquility of spirits, during which time he had lived a life that contrasted as much with that of his earlier days as it did with that which he saw commonly lived by others around him, he wrote the first of the four discourses which constitute his famous treatise, "The Temperate Life." This was followed by the three others, one written at the age of eighty-six, one at ninety-one, and the last at ninety-five; the four completing a most instructive life story—one with which he earnestly wished all might become familiar, that they might follow his example, and thus enjoy the countless blessings which had so filled his own cup to overflowing.

Centuries ago, Pythagoras, Herodicus, Hippocrates, Iccus, Celsus, and Galen—as have some in every age—waged a bitter warfare against unnatural habits of life; and accounts of the attainment of extraordinary age, both in ancient and modern times, are not uncommon. The autobiography of Cornaro, however, who, after patient search, discovered in his own person the curative and life-sustaining power of the temperate

*See Note E
Life—and that beyond the century mark—and who, with equal diligence, labored to impress upon others the lesson of his own experience, affords an instance without parallel in all the annals of history.

In a very brief way—more effective, he believed, than if written at greater length—does this remarkable man hand down to posterity his conviction, both from observation and experience, of the utter worthlessness of the kind of life too often seen on all sides. At the same time he pictures the reward to be reaped every moment, but especially in old age, from a life spent in conformity with reason and Nature.

Most particularly does he emphasize the greater value of the later years of life as compared with the earlier ones. By the time men have acquired knowledge, judgment, and experience—the necessary equipment of the fullest citizenship—they are unable, he observes, because of physical degeneration, consequent on irrational and unnatural methods of living, to exercise these qualifications. Such men are then cut off in their prime, leaving, at fifty or sixty, their life work but half completed; and yet, as he protests, were they but to attain extreme age as followers of the life he led, "How much more beautiful would they make the world!"

The first edition of "The Temperate Life"—the work on which Cornaro's fame chiefly rests—was published at Padua in the year 1558; and few works of such small dimension have excited wider or more fervid discussion. For three hundred years this treatise has been a classic in his native land. Translated into Latin, as also into many modern languages, it has been popular wherever studied. Slight as the book is, it has, and will continue to have, a permanent place in general literature; though we believe it may be questioned if many in this country, even among the most cultured readers, have had an opportunity of reading it.

To those only imperfectly acquainted with his story, Cornaro is merely a famous valetudinarian, who was enabled, by temperate living, to pass the age of a hundred. Careful readers of the book, however, will always remember him not only as a most charming autobiographer, but also as a man, who, having successfully solved one of life's most difficult problems, labored to encourage in others those habits which had proved so advantageous in his own case. His assurance that, after all, this world would be a most delightful place if people would but live temperately, is the burden of his message to mankind; and who, today, is ready to declare him wrong in his assertion that man, by the weak indulgence of his appetites, has always shortened his life and failed to reap the countless blessings within his reach? Convinced that from this source come most of the ills that flesh is heir to, Cornaro writes with the confidence that those who listen to him earnestly will not fail to heed his warning. Thus, also, will they not only secure that perfect health of body
and mind, without which complete happiness can never be realized, but will be enabled to prolong, in honorable endeavor, that enviable condition to the extreme limit intended by Nature. He hoped that the faithful following of his counsel would transform into a universal hymn of joy the strain of despairing weariness—so evident throughout the recorded thought of all the centuries—in which men of all nations and ranks of life have deplored the early loss of youth and vigor, and lamented the resistless strides of premature old age.

A simple diet was almost exclusively the nourishment of the oldest peoples of Syria, Egypt, Greece, and, in their most glorious days, of the Romans; and when man shall once more take to heart this lesson of the means of enjoying uninterrupted health and full length of days—blessings which in ages long past were almost universally enjoyed, and which man alone, and the animals under his control, now fail to possess—the world will everywhere be blessed with the presence of those who will be considered in their prime at an age now scarcely believed attainable. There will then be no doubt that life is worth living; and, because man will then seek only its true and enduring joys, those problems that for ages have distressed him will vanish of themselves—problems existing only because of the craving of the unhealthy human brain for those shadows of life so long pictured as its substance.

The reader will have spent his time in vain, however, if he fails to appreciate fully the vital importance of the fact that Cornaro's own regimen, as he most strongly insists, was intended for himself alone—that he does not urge upon everyone the extreme abstinence practiced by himself. All persons, he declares, should observe the temperate life prescribed as Nature's highest law; but, as the temperance of one man is excess in his neighbor, each must discover the suitable quantity and quality of food proper in his own individual case, and then live accordingly. It is the aim and spirit, not the letter, of his example that he implores mankind to observe.

While Cornaro's personal dietary habits are not, indeed, applicable in detail to every individual constitution, and were never, as we have just said, intended by him as such, yet his general rules will always be correct. These have had in the past, and have today, many followers; and the number of those who faithfully tread in the pathway indicated for them by the venerable writer, constantly enjoying, during a long and happy life, the blessings promised them, will continue to increase, let us hope, until it includes, in the not remote future, the vast majority of our race. Even in an age of wealth and luxury, such as ours, in which opportunities rapidly multiply for the gratification of every sensuous desire, we need not fear that those who choose to be critics of Cornaro, and the fundamental rules of his teachings, will continue to find willing listen-
ers. Let us hope that, in time, all will take to heart the lesson taught mankind by the bitter experience of the centuries: that the physical, moral, intellectual, and social condition now so almost hopelessly universal, is but the inevitable result of disobedience of natural law; and that man has but himself to blame when he fails to possess the greatest of earthly blessings—perfect health of body and mind—and fullness of years in which to enjoy it.
Of all tyrants, custom is that which to sustain itself stands most in need of the opinion which is entertained of its power; its only strength lies in that which is attributed to it. A single attempt to break the yoke soon shows us its fragility. But the chief property of custom is to contract our ideas, like our movements, within the circle it has traced for us. It governs us by the terror it inspires for any new and untried condition. It shows us the walls of the prison within which we are inclosed, as the boundary of the world; beyond that, all is undefined, confusion, chaos; it almost seems as though we should not have air to breathe.

—F. P. G. Guizot
PART I

"THE TEMPERATE LIFE"

BY

LOUIS CORNARO
Some, as thou saw'st, by violent stroke shall die,
By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more
In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
Before thee shall appear, that thou may'st know
What misery the inabstinence of Eve
Shall bring on men.

If thou well observe
The rule of “Not too much,” by temperance taught
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return;
So mayst thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother’s lap, or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature.

—Paradise Lost
"THE TEMPERATE LIFE"

BY

LOUIS CORNARO

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN OF HIS

"LA VITA SOBRIA"

IN WHICH HE DEMONSTRATES, BY HIS OWN EXAMPLE,
A SURE AND CERTAIN METHOD OF ATTAINING
A LONG AND HEALTHY LIFE

IN FOUR DISCOURSES

WRITTEN, SEVERALLY, AT THE AGES OF EIGHTY-THREE,
EIGHTY-SIX, NINETY-ONE, AND NINETY-FIVE
Divine Sobriety, pleasing to God, the friend of nature, the daughter of reason, the sister of virtue, the companion of temperate living, . . . the loving mother of human life, the true medicine both of the soul and of the body; how much should men praise and thank thee for thy courteous gifts! for thou givest them the means of preserving life in health, that blessing than which it did not please God we should have a greater in this world—life and existence, so naturally prized, so willingly guarded by every living creature!

—Louis Cornaro
THE FIRST DISCOURSE

Written at the Age of Eighty-three

Wherein the author details the method by which he corrected his infirm condition, strengthened his naturally weak constitution, and thenceforth continued in the enjoyment of perfect health

It is certain that habit, in man, eventually becomes second nature, compelling him to practice that to which he has become accustomed, regardless of whether such a thing be beneficial or injurious to him. Moreover, we see in many instances—and no one can call this into question—that the force of habit will triumph even over reason. Indeed, if a man of good morals frequents the company of a bad man, it very often happens that he will change from good to bad. Yet sometimes the contrary is equally true; namely, that while good habits often change readily for the worse, so also do bad habits change to good ones; since a wicked man who has once been good may still, by frequenting the society of the good, return to the better ways which he had formerly followed. All these changes must be attributed solely to the force of habit, which is truly very great.

It is in consequence of this powerful force of habit, that of late,—indeed during my own lifetime and memory,—three evil customs have gradually gained a foothold in our own Italy. The first of these is adulation and ceremony, the second is heresy, and the third is intemperance. These three vices, cruel monsters of human life as they truly are, have, in our day, prevailed so universally as to have impaired the sincerity of social life, the religion of the soul, and the health of the body.
Having long reflected on this unfortunate condition, I have now determined to treat of the last of these vices—intemperance; and, in order to accomplish all I can toward abolishing it, I shall prove that it is an abuse. With regard to the two other obnoxious habits, I feel certain that, ere long, some noble mind will undertake the task of condemning them and removing them from among us. Thus do I firmly hope that I shall, before I leave this world, see these three abuses conquered and crushed out of Italy, and, consequently, witness the return of my country to her wise and beautiful customs of yore.

Coming, then, to that evil concerning which I propose to speak—the vice of intemperance—I declare that it is a wicked thing that it should prevail to such an extent as to greatly lower, nay, almost abolish, the temperate life. For though it is well known by all that intemperance proceeds from the vice of gluttony, and temperance from the virtue of restraint, nevertheless the former is exalted as a virtuous thing and even as a mark of distinction, while temperance is stigmatized and scorned as dishonorable, and as befitting the miserly alone.

These false notions are due entirely to the force of habit, bred by men's senses and uncontrolled appetites. It is this craving to gratify the appetites which has allured and inebriated men to such a degree that, abandoning the path of virtue, they have taken to following the one of vice—a road which leads them, though they see it not, to strange and fatal chronic infirmities through which they grow prematurely old. Before they reach the age of forty their health has been completely worn out—just the reverse of what the temperate life once did for them. For this, before it was banished by the deadly habit of intemperance, invariably kept all its followers strong and healthy, even to the age of four-score and upward.

O wretched and unhappy Italy, canst thou not see that intemperance kills every year amongst thy people as great a number as would perish during the time of a most dreadful pestilence, or by the sword or fire of many bloody wars! And these truly immoral banquets of thine, now so commonly the custom—feasts so great and intolerable that the tables are never found large enough to accommodate the innumerable dishes set upon them, so that they must be heaped, one upon another, almost mountain high—must we not brand them as so many destructive battles! Who could ever live amid such a multitude of disorders and excesses!

Oh, for the love of God, I conjure you to apply a remedy to this unholy condition! for I am certain there is no vice more displeasing to His Divine Majesty than this fatal one of intemperance. Let this new death, worse than any pestilence ever known, be driven out of Italy; as was the case with that other epidemic, which, though it once caused so
much misery, nowadays does but very little harm—indeed, scarcely any—thanks to the improved state of affairs brought about by good sanitary regulations.

For there is a remedy by which we may banish this fatal vice of intemperance—an easy remedy, and one of which every man may avail himself if he will; that is, to live in accordance with the simplicity of Nature, which teaches us to be satisfied with little, to follow the ways of holy self-control and divine reason, and to accustom ourselves to eat nothing but that which is necessary to sustain life.

We should bear in mind that anything more than this will surely be followed by infirmity and death; and that while intemperance is merely a gratification of the palate—a pleasure that vanishes in a moment—yet, for a long time afterward, it causes the body much suffering and damage, and finally destroys it together with the soul.

I have seen many of my dearest friends and associates, men endowed with splendid gifts of intellect and noble qualities of heart, fall, in the prime of life, victims of this dread tyrant; men who, were they yet living, would be ornaments to the world, while their friendship and company would add to my enjoyment in the same proportion as I was caused sorrow by their loss.

Therefore, to prevent so great an evil for the future, I have decided to point out, in this brief treatise, what a fatal abuse is the vice of intemperance, and how easily it may be removed and replaced by the temperate habits of life which were formerly universal. And this I undertake all the more willingly, since I have been pressed thereunto by a number of young men of the brightest intellect, who are well aware that intemperance is a fatal vice; for they have seen their fathers die from its effects in the flower of manhood, while, on the other hand, they behold me still hale and flourishing at my great age of eighty-three years.

Now, Nature does not deny us the power of living many years. Indeed, old age, as a matter of fact, is the time of life to be most coveted, as it is then that prudence is best exercised, and the fruits of all the other virtues are enjoyed with the least opposition; because, by that time, the passions are subdued, and man gives himself up wholly to reason.

Hence, being desirous that they likewise may attain old age, these young people have besought me that I may be pleased to tell them the means by which I have been able to reach this advanced age. And since I perceive them full of so honest a desire, and as I heartily wish to benefit not only them, but those others also who may wish to read this brief treatise of mine, I shall now set forth, in writing, the cause which induced me to abandon my intemperate habits, and to embrace the orderly and temperate life. I shall likewise relate the manner in which I went about this reform, and the good results I afterward experienced.
through it; whence it will be clearly seen how easy a matter it is to overcome the habit of excess. And I shall demonstrate, in conclusion, how much that is good and advantageous is to be derived from the temperate life.

I say, then, that the dire infirmities from which I constantly suffered, and which had not only invaded my system, but had gained such headway as to have become most serious, were the cause of my renouncing the errors of intemperance to which I had been very much addicted.

The excesses of my past life, together with my bad constitution—my stomach being very cold and moist—had caused me to fall a prey to various ailments, such as pains in the stomach, frequent pains in the side, symptoms of gout, and, still worse, a low fever that was almost continuous; but I suffered especially from disorder of the stomach, and from an unquenchable thirst. This evil—nay, worse than evil—condition left me nothing to hope for myself, except that death should terminate my troubles and the weariness of my life—a life as yet far removed from its natural end, though brought near to a close by my wrong manner of living.

After every known means of cure had been tried, without affording me any relief, I was, between my thirty-fifth and fortieth years, reduced to so infirm a condition that my physicians declared there was but one remedy left for my ills—a remedy which would surely conquer them, provided I would make up my mind to apply it and persevere patiently in its use.

That remedy was the temperate and orderly life, which, they assured me, possessed as great strength and efficacy for the accomplishment of good results, as that other, which was completely its opposite in every way,—I mean an intemperate and disorderly life—possessed for doing harm. And of the power of these two opposite manners of living I should entertain no doubt; both by reason of the fact that my infirmities had been caused by disorder—though, indeed, I was not yet reduced to such extremity that I might not be wholly freed from them by the temperate life, which counteracts the effects of an intemperate one—and because it is obvious that this regular and orderly life preserves in health even persons of feeble constitution and decrepit age, as long as they observe it. It is equally manifest that the opposite life, an irregular and disorderly one, has the power to ruin, while in the strength of early manhood, the constitutions of men endowed with robustness, and to keep them sick for a great length of time. All this is in accordance with the natural law which ordains that contrary ways of living must necessarily produce contrary effects. Art itself, imitating in this the processes of nature, will gradually correct natural defects and imperfections—a principle we find clearly exemplified in agriculture and other similar things.
My physicians warned me, in conclusion, that if I neglected to apply this remedy, in a short time it would be too late to derive any benefit from it; for, in a few months, I should certainly die.

I, who was very sad at the thought of dying at so early an age and yet was continually tormented by sickness, having heard these good and plausible reasons, grew thoroughly convinced that from order and from disorder must of necessity proceed the contrary effects which I have mentioned; and, fired with hope, I resolved that, in order to escape death and, at the same time, to be delivered from my sufferings, I would embrace the orderly life.

Having been instructed by my physicians as to the method I was to adopt, I understood that I was not to partake of any foods, either solid or liquid, save such as are prescribed for invalids; and, of these, in small quantities only. To tell the truth, diet had been prescribed for me before; but it had been at a time, when, preferring to live as I pleased and being weary of such foods, I did not refrain from gratifying myself by eating freely of all those things which were to my taste. And being consumed, as it were, by fever, I did not hesitate to continue drinking, and in large quantities, the wines which pleased my palate. Of all this, of course, after the fashion of invalids, I never breathed a word to my physicians.

After I had once taken a firm resolution that I would henceforth live temperately and rationally, and had realized, as I did, that to do so was not only an easy matter, but, indeed, the duty of every man, I entered upon my new course so heartily that I never afterward swerved from it, nor ever committed the slightest excess in any direction. Within a few days I began to realize that this new life suited my health excellently; and, persevering in it, in less than a year—though the fact may seem incredible to some—I found myself entirely cured of all my complaints.

Now that I was in perfect health, I began to consider seriously the power and virtue of order; and I said to myself that, as it had been able to overcome so many and such great ills as mine, it would surely be even more efficacious to preserve me in health, to assist my unfortunate constitution, and to strengthen my extremely weak stomach.

Accordingly, I began to observe very diligently what kinds of food agreed with me. I determined, in the first place, to experiment with those which were most agreeable to my palate, in order that I might learn if they were suited to my stomach and constitution. The proverb, "Whatever tastes good will nourish and strengthen," is generally regarded as embodying a truth, and is invoked, as a first principle, by those who are sensually inclined. In it I had hitherto firmly believed; but now I was resolved to test the matter, and find to what extent, if any, it was true.

My experience, however, proved this saying to be false. For instance, dry and very cold wine was agreeable to my taste; as were also melons;
and, among other garden produce, raw salads; also fish, pork, tarts, vegetable soups, pastries, and other similar articles. All of these, I say, suited my taste exactly, and yet I found they were hurtful to me. Thus having, by my own experience, proved the proverb in question to be erroneous, I ever after looked upon it as such, and gave up the use of that kind of food and of that kind of wine, as well as cold drinking. Instead, I chose only such wines as agreed with my stomach, taking of them only such a quantity as I knew it could easily digest; and I observed the same rule with regard to my food, exercising care both as to the quantity and the quality. In this manner, I accustomed myself to the habit of never fully satisfying my appetite, either with eating or drinking—always leaving the table well able to take more. In this I acted according to the proverb: "Not to satiate one's self with food is the science of health."

Being thus rid, for the reasons and in the manner I have given, of intemperance and disorder, I devoted myself entirely to the sober and regular life. This had such a beneficial effect upon me that, in less than a year as I have just said, I was entirely freed from all the ills which had been so deeply rooted in my system as to have become almost incurable.

Another excellent result which this new life effected in me was that I no longer fell sick every year—as I had always previously done while following my former sensual manner of life—of a strange fever, which at times had brought me near to death's door; but, under my new regimen, from this also was I delivered.

In a word, I grew most healthy; and I have remained so from that time to this day, and for no other reason than that of my constant fidelity to the orderly life. The unbounded virtue of this is, that that which I eat and drink—always being such as agrees with my constitution and, in quantity, such as it should be—after it has imparted its invigorating elements to my body, leaves it without any difficulty and without ever generating within it any bad humors. Whence, following this rule, as I have already said, I have constantly been, and am now—thank God!—most healthy.

It is true, however, that besides these two very important rules which I have always so carefully observed, relative to eating and drinking—namely, to take only the quantity which my stomach can easily digest and only the kinds that agree with it—I have also been careful to guard against great heat and cold, as well as extreme fatigue or excesses of any nature; I have never allowed my accustomed sleep and rest to be interfered with; I have avoided remaining for any length of time in places poorly ventilated; and have been careful not to expose myself too much to the wind or the sun; for these things, too, are great disorders. Yet it is not a very difficult matter to avoid them; for, in a being endowed with
reason, the desire of life and health possesses greater weight than the mere pleasure of doing things which are known to be hurtful.

I have also preserved myself, as far as I have been able, from those other disorders from which it is more difficult to be exempt; I mean melancholy, hatred, and the other passions of the soul, which all appear greatly to affect the body. However, my efforts in this direction have not been so successful as to preserve me wholly; since, on more than one occasion, I have been subject to either one or the other of these disturbances, not to say all of them. Yet even this fact has proved useful to me; for my experience has convinced me that, in reality, these disorders have not much power over, nor can they do much harm to, the bodies of those whose lives are governed by the two rules I have already mentioned relative to eating and drinking. So I can say, with truth, that whosoever observes these two principal rules can suffer but little from any disorder.

Galen,* the famous physician, bore testimony to this truth long before my time. He asserts that all other disorders caused him but very little harm, because he had learned to guard against those of excessive eating and drinking; and that, for this reason, he was never indisposed for more than a day. That this is indeed true I can bear living testimony, corroborated by the statement of everybody who knows me; for my friends, well aware that I have often suffered exposure to cold, heat, and other similar disorders, have also seen me disturbed in mind on account of various misfortunes that have befallen me at different times. Nevertheless, they know that these troubles of mine have harmed me but little; but they can testify to the considerable damage which these very things have brought to others who were not followers of the temperate and regular life.

Among these I may number a brother of mine, and several other near relatives; who, trusting to their good constitutions, did not follow the temperate life—a fact which was the cause of grave harm to them. Their perturbations of mind exercised great influence over their bodies; and such was the anxiety and melancholy with which they were overwhelmed when they saw me involved in certain highly important lawsuits brought against me by men of power and position, and so great was their fear that I should lose, that they were seized with the humor of melancholy, of which the bodies of those who live irregularly are always full. This humor so embittered their lives, and grew upon them to such a degree, that it brought them to the grave before their time.

Yet I suffered nothing throughout it all; for, in me, this humor was not excessive. On the contrary, encouraging myself, I tried to believe that

*See Note F
God had permitted those lawsuits to be brought against me in order that my own strength and courage might better be made known, and that I should win them to my own advantage and honor; as in fact I eventually did, gaining a glorious and profitable victory. And the very great consolation of soul I then experienced had, in its turn, no power to harm me.

It is thus clear that neither melancholy nor any other disorder can seriously injure bodies governed by the orderly and temperate life. Nay, I shall go still further, and assert that even accidents have the power to do but little harm, or cause but little pain, to the followers of such a life.

The truth of this statement I learned by my own experience at the age of seventy. It happened, one day, while driving at a high rate of speed, I met with an accident. My carriage was overturned, and was dragged quite a distance before the horses could be stopped. Being unable to extricate myself, I was very badly hurt. My head and the rest of my body were painfully bruised, while one of my arms and one of my legs received especially severe injuries.

I was brought home, and my family sent immediately for the doctors; who, when they had come and found me at my advanced age so shaken and in so bad a plight, could not help giving their opinion that I would die within three days.

They suggested two things, however, as their only hopes for my recovery: one was bleeding, the other was purging; in order, as they said, to cleanse my system and thus prevent the alteration of the humors, which they expected at any moment to become so much disturbed as to produce high fever. I, nevertheless, convinced that the regular life I had led for many years had united, equalized, and disposed all my humors so well that they could not possibly be subject to so great alteration, refused either to be bled or to take any medicine. I merely had my arm and leg straightened, and permitted my body to be rubbed with certain oils which were recommended by the physicians as appropriate under the circumstances. It followed that, without using any other kind of remedy and without suffering any further ill or change for the worse, I entirely recovered—a thing, which, while fulfilling my own expectations, seemed to my doctors nothing less than miraculous.

The unavoidable conclusion to be drawn from this is, that any man who leads the regular and temperate life, not swerving from it in the least degree where his nourishment is concerned, can be but little affected by other disorders or incidental mishaps. Whereas, on the other hand, I truly conclude that disorderly habits of living are those which are fatal.

By a recent experience of mine—that is, as late as four years ago—this was proved to me unmistakably. Having been induced by the advice of my physicians, the admonitions of my friends and their loving exhorta-
tions, to make a change in my manner of living, I found this change—consisting in an increase in the ordinary quantity of my food—to be, in reality, a disorder of much greater importance than might have been expected; since it brought on me a most severe illness. As the whole event is appropriate here, and because the knowledge of it may be of advantage to others, I shall now relate it in all its particulars.

My dearest relatives and friends, who love and cherish me devotedly and are inspired by warm and true affection, observed how very little I ate, and, in unison with my physicians, told me that the food I took could not possibly be sufficient to sustain a man of an age so advanced as mine. They argued that I should not only preserve, but rather aim to increase, my strength and vigor. And as this could only be done by means of nourishment, it was absolutely necessary, they said, that I should eat rather more abundantly.

I, on the other hand, brought forward my reasons to the contrary; namely, that nature is satisfied with little; that my spare diet had been found sufficient to preserve me in health all these many years; and that, with me, this abstemious habit had long since become second nature. I maintained, furthermore, that it was in harmony with reason that, as my age increased and my strength lessened, I should diminish, rather than increase, the quantity of my food. This was true; since the digestive powers of the stomach were also growing weaker in the same proportion as my vigor became impaired. Wherefore I could see no reason why I should increase my diet.

To strengthen my argument, I quoted those two natural and obviously true, proverbs: the one, that "Whosoever wishes to eat much must eat little"—which means simply that the eating of little lengthens a man's life, and by living a long time he is enabled to eat a great deal; the other, that "The food from which a man abstains, after he has eaten heartily, is of more benefit to him than that which he has eaten."

However, neither of these wise sayings, nor any other argument I could offer, proved effectual; for my friends only pressed me the harder. Now, I did not like to appear obstinate or as though I considered myself more of a doctor than the very doctors themselves; moreover, I especially wished to please my family, who desired it very earnestly, believing, as they did, that such an increase in my ordinary allowance would be beneficial to my strength. So I at last yielded, and consented to add to the quantity of my food. This increase, however, was by only two ounces in weight; so that, while, with bread, the yolk of an egg, a little meat, and some soup, I had formerly eaten as much as would weigh in all exactly twelve ounces, I now went so far as to raise the amount to fourteen ounces; and, while I had formerly drunk but fourteen ounces of wine, I now began to take sixteen ounces.
The disorder of this increase had, at the end of ten days, begun to affect me so much, that, instead of being cheerful, as I had ever been, I became melancholy and choleric; everything annoyed me; and my mood was so wayward that I neither knew what to say to others nor what to do with myself. At the end of twelve days I was seized with a most violent pain in the side, which continued twenty-two hours. This was followed by a terrible fever, which lasted thirty-five days and as many nights without a moment’s interruption; although, to tell the truth, it kept constantly diminishing after the fifteenth day. Notwithstanding such abatement, however, during all that period I was never able to sleep for even half of a quarter of an hour; hence, everybody believed that I would surely die. However, I recovered—God be praised!—solely by returning to my former rule of life; although I was then seventy-eight years of age, and it was just in the heart of the coldest season of a very cold year, and I as frail in body as could be.

I am firmly convinced that nothing rescued me from death but the orderly life which I had observed for so many years; in all of which time no kind of sickness had ever visited me, unless I may call by that name some slight indisposition lasting a day or two only. The steady rule of life I had so long observed had not, as I have already said, allowed the generation of any evil or excessive humors in my body; or, if any had been formed, it had not permitted them to acquire strength or to become malignant, as is the case in the bodies of old persons who live without restraint. Consequently, as in my system there was none of that chronic viciousness of humors which kills men, but only that new condition brought about by my recent irregularity, this attack of illness—although indeed very serious—was not able to cause my death.

This, and nothing else, was the means of my recovery; whence we may judge how great are the power and virtue of order, and how great is the power of disorder—the latter having been able, in a few days, to bring upon me a sickness which proved to be so terrible; whereas the regular and temperate life had maintained me in perfect health during so many years. And it seems to me most reasonable that, if the world is maintained by order, and if our life is nothing else—so far as the body is concerned—but the harmony and order of the four elements, it must follow that only through this same order can our life be sustained; while, on the other hand, it is ruined by sickness or dissolved by death, according as this order is not observed. It is through order that the sciences are more easily mastered; it is order that gives the victory to armies; and, finally, it is due to order that the stability of families, of cities, and even of governments, is maintained.

Therefore I conclude that orderly living is the most positive law and foundation of a long and healthy life. We may say it is the true and only
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medicine; and whoever considers all this deliberately must declare it is indeed so.

When a physician pays a visit to a sick man, he prescribes this as the very first condition of recovery, urging him, above all things, to live the orderly life. In like manner, when he bids good-bye to his patient upon his recovery, he recommends, as a means of preserving restored health, that he continue this orderly life. And there is no doubt that if the one so advised were to act accordingly, he would avoid all sickness in the future; because a well-regulated life removes the causes of disease. Thus, for the remainder of his days, he would have no further need either of doctors or of medicines.

Moreover, by applying his mind to this matter which should so deeply concern him, he would become his own physician, and, indeed, the only perfect one he could have; for it is true that "A man cannot be a perfect physician of any one save of himself alone."

The reason of this is that any man may, by dint of experimenting, acquire a perfect knowledge of his own constitution and of its most hidden qualities, and find out what food and what drink, and what quantities of each, will agree with his stomach. It is impossible to have equally accurate knowledge of these things in another person; since it is only with difficulty that we may discover them in ourselves. And to learn them in our own cases, great attention, considerable time, and much study are required. Nor must we overlook the fact that various experiments are absolutely necessary; for there is not so great a variety of features as there is diversity of temperaments and stomachs among men.

Who would believe, for instance, that wine over a year old would be hurtful to my stomach, while new wine would be suitable to it? and that pepper, which is commonly considered a heating spice, would not act upon me as such, but that cinnamon would warm and help me? What physician could have informed me of these two hidden qualities of my nature; since I myself, after a long course of observation, have barely been able to note and find them?

Therefore, I say again, from all these reasons it follows that it is impossible for anyone to be a perfect physician of another. Since, then, a man can have no better doctor than himself, and no better medicine than the temperate life, he should by all means embrace that life.

I do not mean to say, however, that in the knowledge and treatment of the diseases incurred by those who do not lead orderly lives, there is no need of the physician, or that he should not be valued highly. For, if a friend brings comfort when he comes to us in time of sickness,—though his visit be merely to manifest sympathy in our suffering and to encourage us to hope for recovery, how much the more ought we to
appreciate the physician who is a friend visiting us that he may be of service, and who promises to restore our health? Yet, when it comes to a question of preserving health, my opinion is that we should take, as our proper physician, the regular and temperate life. For, as we have seen, it is the true medicine of nature and best suited to man; it keeps him in health, even though he be of an unfortunate constitution; it enables him to retain his strength to the age of a hundred years or more; and, finally, it does not suffer him to pass away through sickness or by any alteration of the humors, but simply by the coming to an end of the radical moisture, which is exhausted at the last. Learned men have often asserted that similar effects could be obtained by means of drinkable gold or the "elixir of life"; yet, though they have thus been sought by many, who have found them?

Let us be truthful. Men are, as a rule, very sensual and intemperate, and wish to gratify their appetites and give themselves up to the commission of innumerable disorders. When, seeing that they cannot escape suffering the unavoidable consequence of such intemperance as often as they are guilty of it, they say—by way of excuse—that it is preferable to live ten years less and to enjoy one's life. They do not pause to consider what immense importance ten years more of life, and especially of healthy life, possess when we have reached mature age, the time, indeed, at which men appear to the best advantage in learning and virtue—two things which can never reach their perfection except with time. To mention nothing else at present, I shall only say that, in literature and in the sciences, the majority of the best and most celebrated works we possess were written when their authors had attained ripe age, and during those same ten latter years for which some men, in order that they may gratify their appetites, say they do not care.

Be this as it may, I have not chosen to imitate them; on the contrary, I have chosen to live these ten years. Had I not done so, I should never have written the treatises, which, as I have been alive and well, I have been able to write during the last ten years; and that they will prove useful I have no doubt.

Furthermore, the aforesaid followers of sensuality will tell you that the temperate and orderly life is an impossible one. To which I answer: Galen, great as a physician, led it, and chose it as the best medicine. So, likewise, did Plato, Cicero, Isocrates, and many other famous men in times past; whose names, lest I grow tedious, I shall forbear to mention. In our own time, we have seen Pope Paul Farnese [1468–1549] and Cardinal Bembo [1470–1547] lead this life, and for this reason attain great age; the same may be said of our two Doges,* Lando [1462–1545] and

*See Note G
Donato [1468–1553]. Besides these, we might mention many others in hurmer states and conditions, not only in the cities, but in the country also; for in every place there are to be found those who follow the temperate life, and always to their own considerable advantage.

Seeing, therefore, that it has been practiced in the past, and that many are now practicing it, the temperate life is clearly proved to be one easily followed; and all the more so by reason of the fact that it does not call for any great exertion. Indeed—as is stated by the above-mentioned Cicero and by all who follow it—the only difficulty, if any there be, consists in making a beginning.

Plato, himself living the temperate life, nevertheless declares that a man in the service of the State cannot lead it; because he is often compelled to suffer heat and cold and fatigues of various kinds, as well as other hardships, all contrary to the temperate life, and in themselves disorders. Yet, I repeat the assertion I have already made, that these disorders are not of any great consequence, and are powerless to cause grievous sickness or death, provided he who is obliged to suffer them leads an abstemious life, and is never guilty of any excess in eating or drinking. Excess is a thing which any man, even one who is in the service of the State, can very well avoid, and must, indeed, necessarily avoid; since by so doing he may rest assured, either that he will never incur those ills into which it would otherwise be easy for him to fall while committing disorders which are brought upon him in the discharge of his duties, or that he will be able the more easily and quickly to free himself of those ills, should he, perchance, be overtaken by them.

Here one might object—as some actually do—that a man accustomed to lead the temperate life, having always, while in sound health, partaken of food proper for sick persons, and in small quantities only, has nothing left to fall back upon in time of sickness.

To this objection I shall answer, in the first place, that Nature, being desirous to preserve man as long as possible, teaches him what rule to follow in time of illness; for she immediately deprives the sick of their appetite in order that they may eat but little—for with little, as it has already been said, Nature is content. Consequently, whether the sick man, up to the time of his illness, has led the orderly or a disorderly life, it is necessary that he should then partake of such food only as is suited to his condition, and, in quantity, less of it than he was wont to take when in health. Should he, when ill, continue to eat the same amount as when in health, he would surely die; while, were he to eat more, he would die all the sooner. For his natural powers, already oppressed with sickness, would thereby be burdened beyond endurance, having had forced upon them a quantity of food greater than they could support under the circumstances.
A reduced quantity is, in my opinion, all that is required to sustain the invalid.

Another answer to this objection—and a better one—is, that he who leads the temperate life can never fall sick, or at least can do so only rarely; and his indisposition lasts but a very short while. For, by living temperately, he removes all the causes of illness; and, having removed these, he thereby removes the effects. So the man who lives the orderly life should have no fear of sickness; for surely he has no reason to fear an effect, the cause of which is under his own control.

Now, since the orderly life is, as we have seen, so useful, so potent, so beautiful, and so holy, it should be embraced and followed by every rational being; and this all the more from the fact that it is a life very easy to lead, and one that does not conflict with the career of any condition of man.

No one need feel obliged to confine himself to the small quantity to which I limit myself; nor to abstain from fruit, fish, and other things which I do not take. For I eat but little; and my reason in doing so is that I find a little sufficient for my small and weak stomach. Moreover, as fruit, fish, and similar foods disagree with me, I do not use them. Persons, however, with whom these do agree may—nay, should—partake of them; for to such they are by no means forbidden. That which is forbidden to them and to everybody else, is to partake of food, even though it be of the kind suited to them, in a quantity so large that it cannot be easily digested; and the same is true with regard to drink. But should there be a man to whom no kind of food is harmful, he, obviously, would not be subject to the rule of quality, but must needs regard only that of quantity—an observance which becomes a very easy matter.

I do not wish to be told here that among those who lead the most irregular lives there are men, who, in spite of this fact, reach, healthy and robust, those furthest limits of life attained by the temperate; for this argument is grounded upon a position uncertain and dangerous, and upon a fact, moreover, which is of so rare occurrence that, when it does occur, it appears more a miracle than a natural result. Hence it should not persuade us to live disorderly lives; for Nature was merely unwontedly liberal to those irregular livers, and very few of us can, or should, hope that she will be as bountiful to us.

He who, trusting to his youth or his strong constitution and perfect stomach, will not take proper care of himself, loses a great deal, and every day is exposed, in consequence of his intemperate life, to sickness and even death. For this reason I maintain that an old man who lives regularly and temperately, even though he be of poor constitution, is more likely to live than is a young man of perfect health if addicted to disorderly habits.
There is no doubt, of course, that a man blessed with a strong constitution will be able to preserve himself longer by living the temperate life than he who has a poor one; and it is also true that God and Nature can cause men to be brought into the world with so perfect constitutions that they will live for many years in health, without observing this strict rule of life. A case of this kind is that of the Procurator* Thomas Contarin of Venice [1454–1554], and another is that of the Knight Anthony Capodivacca of Padua [1465–1555]. But such instances are so rare that, it is safe to say, there is not more than one man in a hundred thousand of whom it will prove true.

The universal rule is that they who wish not only constantly to enjoy perfect health and to attain their full limit of life, but finally to pass away without pain or difficulty and of mere exhaustion of the radical moisture, must lead the temperate life; for upon this condition, and no other, will they enjoy the fruits of such a life—fruits almost innumerable, and each one to be infinitely prized. For as sobriety keeps the humors of the body pure and mild, so, likewise, does it prevent fumes from arising from the stomach to the head; and the brain of him who lives in this manner is, as a result, constantly in a clear condition, permitting him to maintain entire the use of reason. Thus, to his own extreme comfort and contentment, is he enabled to rise above the low and mean considerations of this world to the high and beautiful contemplation of things divine. In this manner he considers, knows, and understands, as he never would have otherwise done, how great are the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of God. Descending thence to the realms of Nature, he recognizes in her the daughter of the same God; and he sees and touches that which at any other age of his life, or with a less purified mind, he could never have seen or touched.

Then, indeed, does he fully realize the ugliness of vice, into which those persons fall who have not learned to control their passions or to bridle those three importunate desires which seem, all three together, to be born with us in order to keep us forever troubled and disturbed—the desires of carnal pleasures, of honors, and of worldly possessions. These lusts appear to increase with age in those who are not followers of the temperate life; because, when passing through the years of earlier manhood, they did not relinquish, as they should have done, either sensuality or appetite, to embrace in their stead reason and self-control—virtues which followers of the temperate life never abandoned in their years of strength.

On the contrary, these more fortunate men, well knowing that such passions and desires are irrational, and having given themselves wholly

*See Note H
to reason, were freed both of their tyranny and at the same time of all other vices, and drawn, instead, to virtue and good works. By this means, from the vicious men they had once been, they became true and upright. At length, in process of time and owing to extreme age, their dissolution and close of life are near at hand. Yet, conscious that they have, through God's special grace, abandoned the ways of vice and ever afterward followed those of virtue, and firmly hoping, moreover, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, to die in His grace, they are not saddened by the thought of the approach of death, which they know to be unavoidable.

This is especially the case when, loaded with honors and satiated with life, they perceive they have reached that age which scarcely any man—among the many thousands born into this world—who follows a different mode of living, ever attains. And the inevitable approach of death grieves them so much the less in that it does not come suddenly or unexpectedly, with a troublesome and bitter alteration of the humors, and with sharp pains and cruel fever; but it comes most quietly and mildly. For, in them, the end is caused merely by the failure of the radical moisture; which, consumed by degrees, finally becomes completely exhausted, after the manner of a lamp which gradually fails. Hence they pass away peacefully, and without any kind of sickness, from this earthly and mortal life to the heavenly and eternal one.

O holy and truly happy Temperate Life, most worthy to be looked upon as such by all men! even as the other, disorderly and so contrary to thee, is sinful and wretched—as those who will but stop to reflect upon the opposite effects of both must clearly see. Thy lovely name alone should be sufficient to bring men to a knowledge of thee; for thy name, The Orderly and Temperate Life, is beautiful to speak; while how offensive are the words disorder and intemperance! Indeed, between the very mention of these two opposites lies the same difference as between those other two, angel and devil.

I have so far given the reasons for which I abandoned disorder and devoted myself wholly to the temperate life; also the manner in which I went about it that I might accomplish my end; together with the subsequent effects of this change; and, finally, I have attempted to describe the advantages and blessings which the temperate life bestows on those who follow it.

And now, since some sensual and unreasonable men pretend that long life is not a blessing or a thing to be desired, but that the existence of a man after he has passed the age of sixty-five cannot any longer be called a living life, but rather should be termed a dead one, I shall plainly show they are much mistaken; for I have an ardent desire that every man should strive to attain my age, in order that he may enjoy what I have found—and what others, too, will find—to be the most beautiful period of life.
For this purpose I wish to speak here of the pastimes and pleasures which I enjoy at this advanced season of life. I desire, in this manner, openly to bear witness to all mankind—and every person who knows me will testify to the truth of what I say—that the life which I am now living is a most vital one, and by no means a dead one; and that it is deemed, by many, a life as full of happiness as this world can give.

Those who know me well will give this testimony, in the first place, because they see, and not without the greatest admiration and amazement, how strong I am; that I am able to mount my horse without assistance; and with what ease and agility I can not only ascend a flight of stairs, but also climb a whole hill on foot. They also see how I am ever cheerful, happy, and contented—free from all perturbations of the soul and from every vexatious thought; instead of these, joy and peace have fixed their abode in my heart, and never depart from it. Moreover, my friends know how I spend my time, and that it is always in such a manner that life does not grow tedious to me; they see that there is no single hour of it that I am not able to pass with the greatest possible delight and pleasure.

Frequently I have the opportunity to converse with many honorable gentlemen; among them, a number who are renowned for their intellect and refinement, and distinguished by their literary attainments, or are of excellence in some other way. When their conversation fails me, I enjoy the time in reading some good book. Having read as much as I care to, I write; endeavoring in this, as in what other manner soever I may, to be of assistance to others, as far as is in my power.

All these things I do with the greatest ease and at my leisure, at their proper seasons, in my own residence; which, besides being situated in the most beautiful quarter of this noble and learned city of Padua, is, in itself, really handsome and worthy of praise—truly a home, the like of which is no longer built in our day. It is so arranged that in one part of it I am protected against the great heat of summer, and in the other part against the extreme cold of winter; for I built the house according to the principles of architecture, which teach us how that should be done. In addition to the mansion, I enjoy my various gardens, beautified by running streams—retreats wherein I always find some pleasant occupation for my time.

I have, besides this, another mode of recreating myself. Every year, in April and May, as well as in September and October, I spend a few days at a country-seat of mine, situated in the most desirable part of the Euganean Hills.* It is adorned with beautiful gardens and fountains; and I especially delight in its extremely comfortable and fine dwelling.

*See Note 1
In this spot I also take part, at times, in some easy and pleasant hunting, such as is suited to my age.

For as many days again, I enjoy my villa in the plain. It is very beautiful, both on account of its fine streets converging into a large and handsome square—in the center of which stands the church, a structure well befitting the place and much honored—as also because it is divided by a large and rapid branch of the river Brenta, on either side of which spread large tracts of land, all laid out in fertile and carefully cultivated fields. This district is now—God be praised!—exceedingly well populated; for it is, indeed, a very different place from what it was formerly, having once been marshy and of unwholesome atmosphere—a home fit rather for snakes than for human beings. But, after I had drained off the waters, the air became healthful and people flocked thither from every direction; the number of the inhabitants began to multiply exceedingly; and the country was brought to the perfect condition in which it is today. Hence I can say, with truth, that in this place I have given to God an altar, a temple, and souls to adore Him. All these are things which afford me infinite pleasure, solace, and contentment every time I return thither to see and enjoy them.

At those same times every year, I go, as well, to revisit some of the neighboring cities, in order that I may enjoy the society of those of my friends whom I find there; for I derive great pleasure from conversing with them. I meet, in their company, men distinguished for their intellect—architects, painters, sculptors, musicians, and agriculturists; for our times have certainly produced a considerable number of these. I behold, for the first time, their more recent works, and see again their former ones; and I always learn things which it is agreeable and pleasing to me to know. I see the palaces, the gardens, the antiquities, and, together with these, the squares, the churches, and the fortresses; for I endeavor to omit nothing from which I can derive either delight or information.

My greatest enjoyment, in the course of my journeys going and returning, is the contemplation of the beauty of the country and of the places through which I travel. Some of these are in the plains; others on the hills, near rivers or fountains; and all are made still more beautiful by the presence of many charming dwellings surrounded by delightful gardens.

Nor are these my diversions and pleasures rendered less sweet and less precious through the failing of my sight or my hearing, or because any one of my senses is not perfect; for they are all—thank God!—most perfect. This is true especially of my sense of taste; for I now find more true relish in the simple food I eat, wheresoever I may chance to be, than I formerly found in the most delicate dishes at the time of my intemperate life. Neither does the change of bed affect me in the slightest degree;
for I always sleep soundly and quietly in what place soever I may happen to be—nothing disturbs me, so that my dreams are always happy and pleasant.

With the greatest delight and satisfaction, also, do I behold the success of an undertaking highly important to our State; namely, the fitting for cultivation of its waste tracts of country, numerous as they were. This improvement was commenced at my suggestion; yet I had scarcely ventured to hope that I should live to see it, knowing, as I do, that republics are slow to begin enterprises of great importance. Nevertheless, I have lived to see it. And I was myself present with the members of the committee appointed to superintend the work, for two whole months, at the season of the greatest heat of summer, in those swampy places; nor was I ever disturbed either by fatigue or by any hardship I was obliged to incur. So great is the power of the orderly life which accompanies me wheresoever I may go!

Furthermore, I cherish a firm hope that I shall live to witness not only the beginning, but also the completion, of another enterprise, the success of which is no less important to our beloved Venice; namely, the protection of our estuary, or lagoon, that strongest and most wonderful bulwark of my dear country. The preservation of this—and be it said not through self-complacency, but wholly and purely for truth's sake—has been advised by me repeatedly, both by word of mouth and by carefully written reports to our Republic; for as I owe to her, by right, the fullest means of assistance and benefit that I can give, so also do I most fondly desire to see her enjoy prolonged and enduring happiness, and to know that her security is assured.

These are the true and important recreations, these the comforts and pastimes, of my old age, which is much more to be prized than the old age or even the youth of other men; since it is free, by the grace of God, from all the perturbations of the soul and the infirmities of the body, and is not subject to any of those troubles which woefully torment so many young men and so many languid and utterly worn-out old men.

If to great and momentous things it be proper to compare lesser ones, or rather those, I should say, which are by many considered as hardly worthy of notice, I shall mention, as another fruit which I have gathered from the temperate life, that at my present age of eighty-three I have been able to compose a delightful comedy, full of innocent mirth and pleasant sayings—a manner of poem, which, as we all know, is usually the fruit and production of youth only, just as tragedy is the work of old age; the former, because of its grace and joyousness, is more in harmony with the early years of life, while the melancholy character of the latter is better suited to old age. Now, if that good old man, a Greek and a poet [Sophocles], was so highly commended for having written a tragedy at
the age of seventy-three, and was, by reason of this deed, regarded as vigorous and sound minded—although tragedy, as I have just said, is a sad and melancholy form of poetry—why should I be deemed less fortunate or less hale than he, when I have, at an age greater than his by ten years, written a comedy, which, as everybody knows, is a cheerful and witty kind of composition? Assuredly, if I am not an unfair judge of myself, I must believe that I am now more vigorous and more cheerful than was that poet when burdened with ten years less of life.

In order that nothing be wanting to the fullness of my consolation, to render my great age less irksome, or to increase my happiness, I am given the additional comfort of a species of immortality in the succession of my descendants. For, as often as I return home, I find awaiting me not one or two but eleven grandchildren, all the offspring of one father and mother, and all blessed with perfect health; the eldest is eighteen years of age, the youngest, two; and, as far as can now be judged, all are fond of study and inclined to good habits. Among the younger ones, I always enjoy some one as my little jester; for, truly, between the ages of three and five, the little folks are natural merrymakers. The older children I look upon as, in a certain way, my companions; and, as Nature has blessed them with perfect voices, I am delighted with their singing, and with their playing on various instruments. Indeed, I often join in their singing; for my voice is now better, clearer, and more sonorous than it ever was before.

Such, then, are the pastimes of my old age; and from these it may readily be seen that the life I am leading is alive and not dead, as those persons say who are ignorant of what they are speaking. To whom, in order that I may make it clearly understood how I regard other people's manner of living, I truly declare that I would not be willing to exchange either my life or my great age with that of any young man, though he be of excellent constitution, who leads a sensual life; for I well know that such a one is, as I have already stated, exposed every day—nay, every hour—to a thousand kinds of infirmity and death.

This is a fact so obviously clear that it has no need of proof; for I remember right well what I used to do when I was like them. I know how very thoughtless that age is wont to be, and how young men, incited by their inward fire, are inclined to be daring and confident of themselves in their actions, and how hopeful they are in every circumstance; as much on account of the little experience they have of things past, as because of the certainty they feel of living long in the future. Thus it is that they boldly expose themselves to every kind of peril. Putting aside reason, and giving up the ruling of themselves to sensuality, they seek with eagerness for means by which to gratify every one of their appetites, without perceiving—unfortunate wretches!—that they
are bringing upon themselves the very things which are most unwel-
come: not only sickness, as I have said many times, but also death.

Of these evils, sickness is grievous and troublesome to suffer; and the
other, which is death, is altogether unbearable and frightful—certainly
to any man who has given himself up a prey to sensuality, and especially
to young people, to whom it seems that they lose too much in dying
before their time. And it is indeed frightful to those who reflect upon the
errors with which this mortal life of ours is filled, and upon the ven-
geance which the justice of God is liable to take in the eternal punish-
ment of the wicked.

I, on the contrary, old as I am, find myself—thanks always to Al-
mighty God!—entirely free of both the one and the other of these two
cares: of the one, sickness, because I know to a certainty I cannot ever
fall sick, the holy medicine of the temperate life having removed from
me forever all the causes of illness; and of the other, namely, of death,
because I have learned, through a practice of many years, to give full
play to reason. Wherefore I not only deem it wrong to fear that which
cannot be avoided, but I also firmly hope that, when the hour of my
passing away is come, I shall feel the consoling power of the grace of
Jesus Christ.

Moreover, although I am fully aware that I, like everybody else, must
come to that end which is inevitable, yet it is still so far away that I
cannot discern it. For I am certain there is no death in store for me save
that of mere dissolution; since the regular method of my life has closed
all other avenues to the approach of death, and has prevented the hu-
mors of my body from waging against me any other war than that
arising from the elements of which my body was originally formed.

I am not so unwise as not to know that, having been born, I must die.
Yet beautiful and desirable, indeed, is that death which Nature provides
for us by way of the dissolution of the elements; both because she herself,
having formed the bond of life, finds more easily the way to loose it, and
also because she delays the end longer than would the violence of dis-
ease. Such is the death, which, without playing the poet, alone deserves
the name of death, as arising from Nature's laws. It cannot be otherwise;
for it comes only after a very long span of life, and then solely as the
result of extreme weakness. Little by little, very slowly, men are reduced
to such a state that they find themselves no longer able to walk, and
scarcely to reason; moreover, they become blind, deaf, and bent, and
afflicted with every other kind of infirmity. But, so far as I am concerned,
I feel certain that not only will my end, by the blessing of God, be very
different, but also that my soul, which has so agreeable a habitation in
my body—where it finds nothing but peace, love, and harmony, not only
between the humors, but also between the senses and reason—rejoices
and abides in it in a state of such complete contentment, that it is only reasonable to believe it will require much time and the weight of many years to force it to leave. Wherefore I may fairly conclude there is yet in store for me a long continuance of perfect health and strength, wherein I may enjoy this beautiful world, which is indeed beautiful to those who know how to make it so for themselves, as I have done. And I treasure the hope that, through the grace of God, I shall also be able to enjoy the other world beyond. All this is solely by means of virtue, and, of the holy life of order which I adopted when I became the friend of reason and the enemy of sensuality and appetite—an adoption which may easily be made by any man who wishes to live as becomes a man.

Now, if the temperate life is such a happy one, if its name is so beautiful and lovable, if the possession of it is so certain and so secure, there is nothing left for me to do except to entreat—since by oratorical persuasion I cannot attain my desire—every man endowed with gentle soul and gifted with rational faculties, to embrace this the richest treasure of life; for as it surpasses all the other riches and treasures of this world by giving us a long and healthy life, so it deserves to be loved, sought after, and preserved always by all.

Divine Sobriety, pleasing to God, the friend of nature, the daughter of reason, the companion of temperate living; modest, agreeable, contented with little, orderly and refined in all her operations! From her, as from a root, spring life, health, cheerfulness, industry, studiousness, and all those actions which are worthy of a true and noble soul. All laws, both divine and human, favor her. From her presence flee—as so many clouds from the sunshine—reveling, disorders, gluttony, excessive humors, indispositions, fevers, pains, and the dangers of death. Her beauty attracts every noble mind. Her security promises to all her followers a graceful and enduring life. Her happiness invites each one, with but little trouble, to the acquisition of her victories. And, finally, she pledges herself to be a kind and benevolent guardian of the life of every human being—of the rich as well as of the poor; of man as of woman; of the old as of the young. To the rich she teaches modesty, to the poor thrift; to man continence, to woman chastity; to the old how to guard against death, and to the young how to hope more firmly and more securely for length of days. Sobriety purifies the senses; lightens the body; quickens the intellect; cheers the mind; makes the memory tenacious, the motions swift, the actions ready and prompt. Through her, the soul, almost delivered of its earthly burden, enjoys to a great extent its liberty; the vital spirits move softly in the arteries; the blood courses through the veins; the heat of the body, always mild and temperate, produces mild and temperate effects; and, finally, all our faculties preserve, with most beautiful order, a joyous and pleasing harmony.
O most holy and most innocent Sobriety, the sole refreshment of nature, the loving mother of human life, the true medicine both of the soul and of the body; how much should men praise and thank thee for thy courteous gifts! Thou givest them the means of preserving life in health, that blessing than which it did not please God we should have a greater in this world—life and existence, so naturally prized, so willingly guarded by every living creature!

As it is not my intention to make, at this time, a panegyric on this rare and excellent virtue, and in order that I may be moderate, even in its regard, I shall bring this treatise to a close; not that infinitely more might not yet be said in its behalf than I have said already, but because it is my wish to postpone the remainder of its praises to another occasion.