

Dames and Knights of the Three-Century Order

By Isabel Maude Hamill

FIRST PAPER

LONG life is not always desirable, and the words of the Psalmist, when he speaks of the length of years allotted to man on this earth, "if by reason of strength they be four score years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow," are profoundly true in the majority of those who live to extreme old age. Yet that there are

splendid exceptions none can deny, of both men and women whose hoary heads are crowns of glory, whose bright alert intellects still quicken those with whom they come in contact and whose activity shames that of many of the younger generation.

The number of centenarians in this country is undoubtedly on the increase, and, strange to say, the proportion of women to men has for many years been three to two.

When the much disputed twentieth century began (for no one will deny that the year 1901 is the twentieth century) the thought occurred to the present writer—are there more than three or four persons living who have seen three centuries? If so, what an interest it would be to the public to know something about their habits, surroundings, and mode of life. Inquiries, observations, and infinite pains and research (all undertaken single-handed) have elicited the following remarkable list of persons whose lives have touched three centuries. The task has been little short of gigantic; but the numerous quaint and kindly epistles received in answer to inquiries concerning relatives or friends will always remain as a pleasant memory to the writer; and to the clergymen, medical men, workhouse chaplains, masters, and others she owes a debt of gratitude for their unfailing courtesy and kindness in trying to verify statements.

Domestic service and large families appear to be conducive to long life in women, for Miss Alsop, who is now 103, lived in the family of the late Lady Audrey Ridsdale for seventy-four years, entering it as nurse when about 25 years of age. (Lady Audrey was a daughter of the Marquis of Townshend, and married the Reverend Robert Ridsdale, and her niece is the wife of General Buller.) Miss Alsop was born in Swallow Street, now Regent Street, London. She remembers distinctly seeing the late Queen come into



Miss Alsop, aged 103

Regent's Park when a child, accompanied by two ladies, and a footman carrying a basket of biscuits, which her Royal Highness would throw into the water to feed the swans.

"Yes, I know what she wore very well, a white frock and a green—well, we called them pelisses in those days—and a yellow leghorn hat. I once met her driving in her carriage, and made my 'obedience' to her as she passed, and she bowed to me in return. I was proud." She frequently saw her at Brighton, picking up shells and pebbles on the beach. Her late mistress, Miss Ridsdale, left her a pound a week, and also made arrangements that the aged servant should not leave the house—on Gosden Common, Guildford, Surrey—as long as she lived. She gets up about four o'clock in the afternoon, and retires again at six; is most intelligent, and enjoys being read to. She has the distinction of having received the prize offered by the late Duchess of Teck some years ago to the female servant in England who had lived with one family the greatest number of years. Her photograph shows a remarkably placid and contented face.

The next dame, Mrs. Haines, died within the last few months at Cheltenham at the age of 104. She also was in domestic service until the time of her marriage to the Cheltenham and Gloucester carrier. She had fourteen children, her eldest son, who is still alive, and was a soldier in India for many years, is now a pensioner at the age of 80, at Woolwich Arsenal. This old lady's eyesight was phenomenal, she would even notice a pin lying on the floor and ask for it to be picked up. Her digestion and appetite were excellent, and on Sundays, if any delay occurred before the pudding was put on the table she would exclaim, "What! ain't Gran going to have any pudding?" Her night-cap was nothing stronger than a little peppermint cordial in hot water, which she greatly relished. Her love of flowers amounted to a passion, and whatever the family went without, "Gran" always had her "bunch of flowers" bought on Saturday. During the last few months of her life she spent many hours in cutting pieces of cloth for stuffing pillows, and her wrinkled but smiling old face would look at the various shapes and

sizes of the cuttings with evident interest. Within a week of her death she could recall frequent visits to the town of George III., George IV., and the Duke of Wellington. One day, she fell suddenly asleep, and from this sleep she passed peacefully out into the



Mrs. Birks, aged 103

great beyond. Her daughter-in-law begged the doctor to do something to restore her if possible, to which he replied, "What! are you not tired of waiting on her?" "No, sir," was the beautiful reply, "no one is ever tired of doing anything for Gran."

Following Mrs. Haines very closely, in fact, there is every probability that in length of life she will exceed her, is Mrs. Birks of Doncaster, who claims the honour of being born in John Wesley's native place, Epworth, in 1799. This fact is vouched for by an entry in a prayer-book printed in 1756. At the present time she is caretaker at the offices of Messrs. Parkin and Company, Solicitors, Priory Place. She is perhaps the most wonderful of the "order" in one respect, for her sight and hearing are scarcely impaired by time! Her faculties are remarkable, and the intelligent interest she takes in all around is little short of marvellous. Her family are long-lived, her mother died at 87, her brother at 86, and her sister at 93 years of age.

We are accustomed to associate good climate with longevity, and undoubtedly in most cases it is a great factor, but in Bilston, in the heart of the black country there is a

dame, Mrs. Martha Tupper by name, in her 103rd year who, in spite of the changeable climate and smoky atmosphere enjoys the best of health and frequently walks as far as Willenhall, a distance of nearly two miles. "Ah!" she once said, "nowadays folks are not what they used to be, they can't walk any distance, they must ride if it's only a mile or two. Buses and trams are spoiling 'em. Why in my young days folks had to walk. It cost a lot to go to Birmingham by coach, and as we were poor we just had to walk." She attributes her wonderful health in a great measure to her love of walking. When nearly 80 years of age, money was obtained for her to go and see her dying mother; this shows that she came



(Sutton, photo, Bilston)

Mrs. Tupper, aged 103

of a long lived family. It is the annual custom of the clerk of the guardians to entertain the old lady to a sumptuous tea on her birthday, and at the last gathering she greatly delighted the audience by singing in a marvellous manner "The Slave." Martha it must be added is an inveterate smoker.

Here follow six dames and one knight about whom little information can be

obtained unless the fact that they have all lived in three centuries.

Mrs. Hannah Solley was a widow for nearly sixty years, and died at Ash (Kent) in her 101st year.

Mrs. Ellen Mountford of Stockton Brook in the 102nd year of her age helped in the work of her house, retained all her faculties, and died just recently.

Mrs. Murrough of Brixton is still alive, and attained her 105th year the other day; Her eldest daughter, who is also alive, being 85. The intellect of both is clear and vigorous, and it is difficult to realise they are mother and daughter. The age of 85 is the oldest at which any parent still living has also a child living.

Mrs. Priest died recently at Bath aged 104 years and ten months. She was exceedingly proud of the fact that out of her ten children, three sons served in the Crimean war. Her descendants, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren number about forty.

Charles Paish who died near Stroud in his 102nd year, save for slight deafness, retained full possession of his faculties to the last.

Mrs. Clara Hammington who died the other day at Streatham at the age of 104 leaves a husband, only four years younger than herself, to mourn her loss.

At Southend-on-Sea a Mrs. Leah Alberry passed away this year at the remarkable age of 108, in possession of all her faculties. During her long life she had hardly ever required a medical man.

The borders of Cowper's country furnish the next Knight of the Order, John Rose, of Weston Underwood, near Olney, who died six months ago in his 103rd year. He was a farm labourer, and up to the end of 1899 was able to do light work such as gardening and chopping wood; when a hundred years of age, he planted and dug in his own garden. He was the son of a shoemaker, who ran away and enlisted, and was subsequently drafted off to the Peninsular wars. There appears to have been some dispute about John's baptism, the father objecting to him being baptized in the Catholic faith, and the mother as strongly objecting to the Protestant, but when the head of the household de-



John Rose, aged 102
(O. Ratcliffe, photo, Olney)

camped, the mother took the opportunity of having the ceremony performed, and the entry in the chapel register is as follows :

Die II Junii, 1802
Baptizatum Joannes
Ruess filius Guliet
et Ruess, Sponsor
Anna Goodman.

The Vicar of Ravenstone and Weston writes: "He never attended a place of worship, but latterly I read to him. He could neither read nor write himself, but he could hear, see, and remember wonderfully well, and never had need of glasses as an indispensable aid up to the very last, and never had any serious illness. He took a glass of porter with his dinner and supper, and retained all his faculties to the end." His daughter, Mrs. Bill Adams, a shepherd's wife, is living at Weston.

In answer to inquiries respecting James Rye of Folkestone, the following interesting details were given; they are especially valuable, as coming from the person with whom he lodged for fifteen years after his wife's

death, and to whom his death at the age of 101, "was a great loss." He was born at Adesham, in Kent, in 1800, and was the eldest of ten children. At nine years of age "went out tenting rooks," and at fourteen was living with a farmer at Bebesbourne, and remembers well going with the farmer's waggon to convey some French prisoners from Dover to Canterbury after the battle of Waterloo. At thirty years of age he married, and became farm bailiff at Chereton, and by dint of perseverance and economy, he became his own master. At seventy years of age he married a second time, and was again a widower at eighty-six. The friend of his second wife, with whom he lived, writes: "He loved his Bible, was a regular church-goer, and always had family prayer; he was a real good man." How beautiful is such a testimony to one whose life had been so marvellously prolonged. After he was ninety years of age he walked several times to Adesham—a distance in and out, of ten miles—to see his brother (who is still alive, aged ninety-two). Up to the last he read without glasses the smallest type, and would sing in his quavering voice, "The Farmer's Boy" with great gusto. He passed away in August 1901, from what the medical man said was "only old age and exhaustion, no disease." Mr. Rye though not an avowed total abstainer was practically one, and was most moderate both in eating and drinking.



(Arthur Burgess, photo, Folkestone)
Mr. James Rye, aged 101

A Knight of the Order of "St. Crispin's" as well as "Three Centuries" most certainly cannot be passed over, and in Mr. Lewis Barton we have a knight of the two orders. Born at New Buckenham, Norfolk, in February 1800, he still lives at East Dereham, in the enjoyment of the best of health and spirits. As one realises his length of life, one's mind goes back to the days when people had time to be measured for their shoes, and one thinks of the many dainty misses, whose high insteps and small ankles he measured in the days gone by, of the tiny children holding up their little feet encased in white socks, showing their pretty bare legs with such evident pride, and of many others dead and gone. Mr. Barton retired from his business as boot and shoe manufacturer quite recently. He has the daily paper read to him every morning, but owing to failing sight and increasing deafness, he does not often walk beyond his garden, but there appears every probability that life for him has not yet come to its close.

A type of woman never met with now is Mrs. Sarah Wilde, who worked for years underground in a coal-pit in South Wales, accomplishing as much work in a day as one of the strongest miners. She was born at a farmhouse, situated midway between Rhymney and Tredegar in Monmouthshire, the exact date cannot be ascertained, but according to the opinion of the oldest inhabitant of Rhymney, she must have been over 107 when she died a few months ago at New Tredegar. Her constitution was remarkably strong, and her health was never impaired by her underground labour, which consisted of cutting coal, and maintaining fire in the ventilating furnace at the bottom of the shaft. In those days the surface veins only were worked, and they did not give off any explosive gases. Doubtless, smokers will take comfort in the knowledge that she was an inveterate smoker up to the last, and yet died in possession of all her faculties! It is pathetic to think that this old pit worker, though living within twenty or thirty miles of the sea, never heard the music of the waves, nor saw "the gathering together of the waters He called sea."

Could the dividing line in life be more acute, or life's contrasts be greater than between the late Lady Carew and Mrs. Wilde the pit-worker? Yet these two women had the connecting link of a marvellous vitality; and both, one surrounded by luxury and refinement, the other amidst the hardest and most uncongenial toil; lived to see three centuries, the hardworking toiler outliving her aristocratic sister by four years.

Lady Carew was born in the stirring times of the Irish Rebellion (1798). When only eighteen years of age, she married Robert Shapland Carew, who in 1834 was raised to the peerage. Her husband's father, the member for Waterford, openly insulted Lord Castlereagh for offering him a bribe to secure his vote for the Act of Union. Lady Carew danced at the historic ball given by the Duke of Richmond at Brussels on the eve of Waterloo. She retained her beauty to the last, and was passionately fond of chess, in which game she indulged during the last two or three years of her life. She passed away only a few months ago at her lovely country house in Woodstown, County Down, in her 104th year.

In a comfortable-looking brick-built house on the west of the Square at Market Harbour lives an old lady, Miss Brown, who is in many respects a remarkable woman. Born in January 1799, and baptized in the following March as the records in the Parish Church duly testify, she still enjoys very good health, and frequently walks in her garden nearly a mile a day when weather permits. In local and imperial affairs she takes a keen interest, and knows as much about the war in South Africa as do most men. It is a strange coincidence, that in the house in which Miss Brown now resides, there lived another centenarian one Eleanor Sollers, who died in 1768.

Mrs. Eliza Howell Jones (widow of the Reverend Howell Jones a former Vicar of Egerton and Bradford-on-Avon), who died at the age of 105 last October, attributed her longevity to the fact that "she never took doctor's physic." Be this as it may, nature endowed her with marvellous vitality and an exceptionally strong constitution. For nearly half a century she lived at Bromley

College, Bromley, Kent, an Institution founded in the year 1666, by John Warner, Bishop of Rochester, "for the residence and support of twenty widows of loyal and orthodox clergymen" to each of whom he assigned £20 per annum, and £50 to a chaplain. This endowment has been augmented by many subsequent benefactions, for in 1767 the Reverend William Hetherington bequeathed £2000 Old South Sea Annuities to purchase coal and candles for the establishment, other bequests have also been left at different times, including £5000 by Dr. Zachary Pearce, Bishop of Rochester in 1774 for the augmentation of the pensions. There are forty-two houses in the college, which form a handsome pile of buildings surrounding two quadrangular areas, and in one of these a link with the eighteenth century, Mrs. Howell Jones, resided in sweet seclusion. Widows came, and widows went to their last earthly resting-place, but she remained, and came to be looked upon as a permanent fixture. She was born nine years before the battle of Trafalgar, and was married on the second anniversary of the battle of Waterloo 1817. After her ninetieth birthday she did not leave her house, and the last nine or ten years of her life, she

remained in her bedroom, not on account of infirmity but because she dreaded the stairs. Up to the last her remarkably strong will asserted itself, and though nearly blind and partially deaf, she issued her commands and insisted on being obeyed. When younger she must have been beautiful, for widows at Bromley say, when eighty years of age she had a round happy face scarcely wrinkled, and would when in the humour entertain friends merrily with stories of the "good old days when George III. was King."

A remarkable old lady Mrs. Sara Gilbert is still living in the 102nd year of her age. She was born within the parish of St. Chad and lived all her life in Lichfield of Johnsonian fame. She married in 1828 Mr. John Gilbert, maltster, and was left a widow in 1857, with one daughter and two sons, all of whom survive. Of these Lieutenant-Colonel John Gilbert is well known as the donor of the Johnson House, and as first honorary freeman of the town. Mrs. Gilbert is a highly educated and cultured person, and Lichfield is justly proud of both her and her son.*

* Since the above was written both mother and son have died.

(To be continued)



The Cranberry

By the Rev. Hugh Macmillan, D.D., LL.D.

HOW the presence of the little wild-fruits that gleam like jewels among the heather, brightens the gloomy appearance of our moorlands! The wanderer brings back from the waste desolate places, where the grey mists always linger, and the wind has a sad, wailing music round the lonely heights, the memory of these wild-fruits among its most delightful treasures. On bare peaty soil the wild rasp grows in great abundance, and is one of the easiest plants to diffuse. Its seeds are carried by birds to favourable localities, where it covers the black soil with its bright verdure.

In such places it is too exposed to severe influences to attain its proper proportions, and speedily perishes. But on the green, patches that are laid like soft carpets among the brown heather, and that are surrounded by the ruins of lowly cottages whose old inhabitants are far away in the colonies, it flourishes with vigour, and flowers and fruits in tangled thickets. Like the nettle it indicates the spot where human dwellings have been, and seems to keep itself closely associated with man's presence in the wilds of Nature. Its fruit, which has a special relish in waste places far from cultivation, is very grateful to

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CONCLUDING PAPER

MRS. MARGARET ANN NEVE, is still living at her beautiful home "Rouge Huis" in the Island of Guernsey at the marvellous age of 110. The register of the Parish Church of St. Peter's Port, Guernsey, informs us that "Marguerite Anne, fille du Sieur Jean Harvey et de Elizabeth Guille, sa femme née le 18 de Mai 1792," was there baptized on May 29, 1792, thus the date of her birth is placed beyond dispute. She recollects distinctly the troublous times of Napoleon Buonaparte, and how the Channel Islands were held in daily readiness to repel invasions. Her father sent her to Bristol that her education might be completed at the school of the then well-known Misses Cottle, sisters of Amos and Joseph, who were somewhat of poets, and

friends of Coleridge, Hannah Moore, Charles Lamb, Hazlitt, &c. She married Mr. John Neve of Tenterden in Kent. After his death in 1849, she returned to her old home and lived with her sister and mother: the former died in 1884 aged 90, and the latter lived into her 99th year. Mrs. Neve and her sister visited every country in Europe except Portugal, and in her 91st year Mrs. Neve paid a second visit to Cracow in Poland. She speaks five or six languages, and reads her Greek Testament with pleasure; for large print she requires no glasses. She frequently entertains the children from the hospital to tea, being very fond of the little ones. Her wonderfully vigorous intellect, her descriptions of scenes and things abroad, and her vivacity astonish all with whom she comes in contact.

Mrs. Elizabeth Hanbury, widow of Cornelius Hanbury, has had an even more interesting life-story than Mrs. Neve. Born in the parish of All Hallows, London Wall, June 9, 1793, of Quaker parents, her birth is duly recorded in the admirable register kept by the Friends at that time. When young she was a frequent visitor with Mrs. Fry to Newgate Prison, and for many years visited the convict ships for women before their departure from the Thames. At that time women convicts were sent to the Antipodes under the sole charge of the men of the ship, and the drink and demoralisation were condemnation enough in themselves of the dreadful system. Mrs. Hanbury, from preference and for example's sake, was a total abstainer long before pledges on the subject were thought of. She also worked energetically in the anti-slave movement. She passed away a few months ago.

Again we have a contrast, long life being no respecter of persons, the luxurious home, the poor cottage, the gipsy's tent and the showman's van alike furnish us with dames and knights of the order, for Mrs. Ann



(Greel, photographer, Guernsey)
Mrs. Neve, aged 110

Smith was born at Pershore, Worcestershire, in a travelling showman's van, and practically lived in one all her life. Last summer she was seen with some roundabouts, and up to a few weeks before her death retained her faculties and showed a wonderful amount of

and his mother who died at 108, was styled the "queen of the gipsies."

The next dame of the order is also a gipsy, by name Prudence Smith, who died this year at 107 years of age. One of the most out-of-the-way places in the Forest of Dean, Wigpool Green, had been her home for many years, and for the last two years she had lived in a cottage with her son Faith Smith at the place named. Like Mrs. Wilde of New Tredegar, she was an inveterate smoker, and retained full possession of her faculties to the last.

Two more gipsies complete the record as far as the writer can ascertain of these nomad "knights and dames." The "gipsy king," Sammy Lee, died in West Ham Workhouse a few weeks ago aged 102; he had only been there for five months, gipsies seldom becoming inmates of our unions. He has a sister still living, who is now 103.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the West Ham Workhouse contained two old women, who had lived into their third century, a Mrs. Perry and a Mrs. Stocks, the former died lately and was buried in the West Ham Cemetery, with every mark of respect, being, the chaplain says, greatly beloved and esteemed. Mrs. Stocks is still alive. When asked her age her invariable answer is: "I was sixteen years old when the battle of Waterloo was fought."

A pathetic interest attaches to Joseph Ellery Parr's likeness, for the very day on which the Reverend J. Vincer-Minter, Master of Newmarket Workhouse received the writer's letter asking for information about him, was the day on which he went "home." "His end was most peaceful, he was quite conscious, always looking up to his Maker and longing for Home. He had been a very strong man in his young days, and worked most of his time in the fens, was in his 103rd year, and was born at Fordham," wrote Mr. Minter. Inquiries respecting Joseph E. Parr elicited a unique and interesting fact, viz., that the workhouse master at Newmarket is also a clergyman of the Church of England, a dual position, to which no other workhouse master in the country can lay claim. When he was appointed master, the services were held in



(Gunn & Stuart, photographers, Richmond)

Mrs. Hanbury

activity considering her age, which was 109. She passed away a short time ago.

Quite recently an old gipsy, Frederick Draper, who was born at Bix, Oxfordshire, died at the age of 104 in a cottage close to Whitley Woods, near Reading. His son, who is 84, tells the writer that "they are thoroughbred gipsies, and his father never lived in a house until within the last few years; they get their living by attending fairs, and selling baskets, skewers, clothes-pegs, &c. His father remembered very well the battle of Waterloo, and young men were wanted so badly that his friends fearing he would be taken for a soldier, dressed him in women's clothes, and for some time he passed as a woman. He remembers bread being 3s. a gallon!" He comes of a long-lived race,

the dining-room, and immediately he set about collecting money to build a church. He met with great success, a pretty church was built in the workhouse grounds, dedicated by the Bishop of Ely, and received the name of St. Etheldreda. In order to be



Mrs. Mary Smith

of more use, Mr. Minter studied for Holy Orders, and was ordained in 1897, and though not the chaplain of the workhouse, he holds the position of honorary assistant curate, and as such preaches in the church every Sunday evening.

The "ould countree" furnishes us with some wonderful instances of longevity, and as far as these investigations go the most ancient of the "dames" is a Mrs. Ellen O'Mullane, who died recently at the extraordinary age of 118 years at Gneeves, county Cork; she was born in 1783, and was alive when the last census was taken. She had three daughters, all of whom are living, the eldest being 82 years of age. Her grandchildren and great-grandchildren number over forty. She recollected well the stirring times of the Irish rebellion of 1798.

Pat Lyons was born in 1799 at Templemolya, four miles from Mitchelstown, county Cork, and died last November. He belonged to the farming class, and was a prominent tenant-righter in the third decade of the last century, and led a large party to O'Connell's memorable meeting at Kelly's Rea, county Limerick in 1832. At the time of Father Mathew's Mission, he became

practically an abstainer. Michael Moher's life teemed with interest from the cradle to the grave. He was born in Kilworth, county Cork, and joined one of the East India Companies eighty years ago. He spent some time in the table-land of Thibet, Western China, and was for a time servant to a trusted lieutenant of Warren Hastings. He went through many campaigns in the Crimea, Egypt, and Hindostan, and was present at the solemn and affecting burial service of Lord Raglan. He never indulged in drink and was exceedingly temperate, and died from sheer old age at 105 in March 1902, at Mitchelstown workhouse, county Cork.

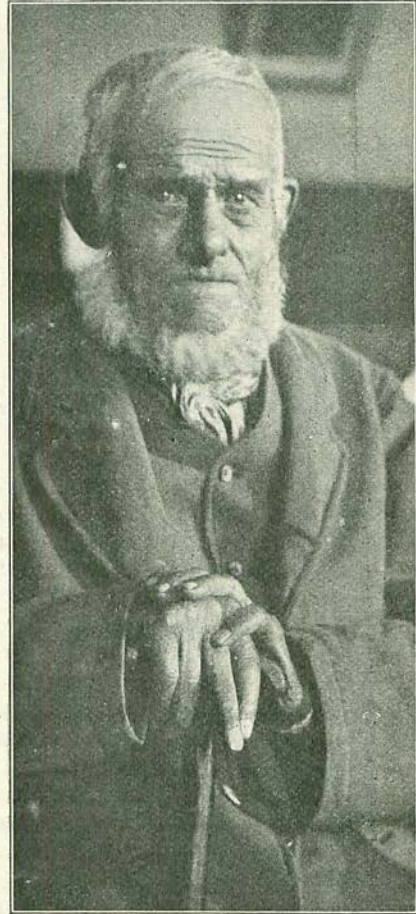
Thomas Fitzgerald, still living in the hospital of Mitchelstown workhouse at the remarkable age of 106, has had adventures others than war. As a youth he took provisions to "Willie Brennan on the moor," as the outlaw of the Kilworth Mountains was called, in the early part of last century, and still tells graphically the thrilling tales of his life, how landlords and yeomen were knocked down, what bloodshed there was, and how "Willie" was equal to all, save one pedlar. This same pedlar having been robbed and otherwise maltreated by the aforesaid "Willie," went into Fermoy, bought a blunderbuss and found a friend whose help he enlisted, and set off for the mountains, encountered the outlaw, and made him give up his stolen treasures at the point of the blunderbuss! This event is celebrated in some of the Irish street ballads. At length Brennan, who became a terror to the neighbourhood was captured, but Fitzgerald still retains a corner in his heart for the man whom when a youth he regarded as somewhat of a hero. The fourth of this remarkable group of men, Jeremiah Luddy, died last year aged 108. He was a respectable farmer, worked with his men and family in the fields and scarcely ever touched alcoholic liquor. He remembered the burning of Kilfinane, and the execution of Staker Wallace in 1798. Mrs. Mary Dea, aged 103, is living in Mitchelstown, this neighbourhood being famous for long life amongst its inhabitants. One of her relatives was the late wife of G. E. Redmond, M.P. Another old "dame" about

whom but slight information can be obtained is a Mrs. Quinn, who, until a month or two ago resided in the townland of Ballymiedoherty, county Down. Up to within a day or two of her death, at the age of 103, she was able to superintend her household affairs, and retained all her faculties. She was also the mother of a large family, all of whom survive her.

There appears to be something either in the Irish air, soil, or climate that is conducive to longevity, for only the other day a French Canadian, named John Lynch, found his way to the ould countree and died at the age of 102 in Rathdrum work-house hospital.

Scotland, too, furnishes some remarkable instances of long life, but Mrs. John Rae who died March 8 in her 105th year, has, perhaps, more descendants living than any other of these dames and knights. She has one son and two daughters surviving her (one of the latter, a Mrs. Douglas in New York, is 84), forty-two grandchildren, one hundred great-grandchildren, and six great-great-grandchildren, making in all 151 descendants! She was born in 1797, in the parish of Urr, her maiden name being Jean Sharpe. At an early age she went to service, and when only eighteen married Alexander Rae, by whom she had eight children. After her marriage she lived at Kirkpatrick, Durham, close to where she was born, and practically all her long life was spent in the district. On the Sunday preceding her 100th birthday, this "dame" held an "at home" which was attended by a large number of relatives, and in spite of the fatigue that such a gathering entailed, she rose as usual the next day, had tea with her family, and enjoyed a walk in the garden; on this occasion she received numbers of centenary gifts, some from titled people. She was a firm adherent of the Church of Scotland, and joined in public worship when in her 100th year, and was the oldest communicant whose name was on the roll. Another Scotch dame, whose relatives claimed for her the distinction of being the oldest of the King's subjects in Scotland, died this year, aged 109, at Gobshealach. Her name was Miss Stewart.

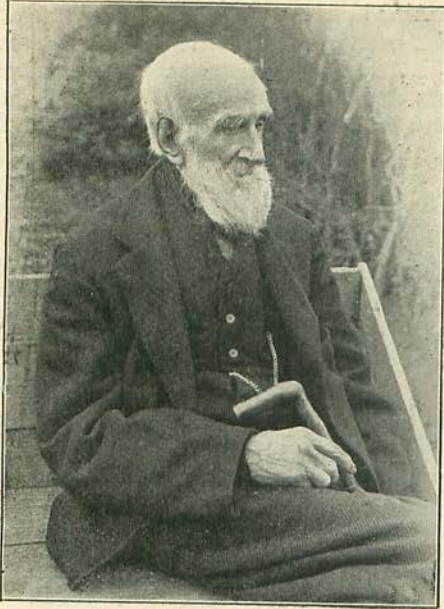
Aberdeenshire gives us a wonderful case of longevity in the person of the late Mrs. Strachan, of Scatterty. The baptismal records of Edinburgh certify that she was born in August 1796, at Sauchentree, Methlink, her maiden name being Martha Calder.



Joseph Ellery Parr, aged 102 years

She married Mr. Alexander Strachan, who died sixty years ago. She spent seventy-two years of her life at South Haddo, and the last six with her grandchildren. She died recently at the age of 105.

People who have seen and conversed with Sir Walter Scott are seldom met with now, but the exhaustive inquiries made when writing this article have resulted in the discovery of



(Black, photographer, Melrose)

William Millar, 103 years old

an old "knight" who has frequently seen and conversed with him, and whose memory at the present time is marvellous. Born in June 1800, at Broadloan Toll Bar, William Millar is still hale and hearty, and will tell of events that he remembers in 1804. For twenty-six years he was grave-digger and church officer at Melrose Abbey Church, and also held the post of Baron Bailies, Officer and Collector of Customs, opening all fairs in the district, such as St. James', St. Boswell's, &c., and gathered in the money imposed on those who had sheep- and horse-folds. His chief hobby is cutting sticks, and last year (his 102nd) he chopped a cartload of trees ready for the fire, and asked for more. He will talk with keen interest of Waterloo and the French prisoners at Melrose. All his life he has been accustomed to outside labour, and has never used either tobacco or snuff, but latterly has taken a little spirits. William Millar brings up the "dames and knights of the three-century" order who have been discovered by the

writer in the United Kingdom, to the extraordinary number of forty-one. In all probability there are others, but she has been unable to find them.

In looking over this long interesting list of "Three-Century Lives" the questions naturally arise: "What means have these persons taken to preserve their health? Is there any special reason that they should have outlived by so many years the span of life allotted to man? In answer to these and similar queries that will no doubt trouble the minds of some who read this article, the writer has arrived at the following conclusions, which may be right—or wrong. First, that an open-air occupation is a great factor in long life, strict moderation in eating and drinking, very little if any alcohol, regular habits, the inheritance of a sound constitution, and a disposition to take things easily, and descent from long-lived families, all tend towards length of days. As by far the largest number of the "knights and dames" come from what are termed the humbler classes, another fact forces itself on the mind, viz., that hard physical labour, a plain and not too generous diet are also aids in this direction, and that the strenuous, nervous, highly strung brain workers but rarely attain to the honour of a "three-century knighthood." In this article there are one or two exceptions, but they only prove the rule; it is the physical not the mental which dominates here.

As to climate and country it is a fact worthy of note that more people over a hundred years old are found in mild climates than in colder ones. Switzerland has none, Denmark only 2, Sweden 10, Norway 23, Germany 78, France 213, whilst Spain has 401, and Servia 575 people who have lived into and past their hundredth year. Ireland with its moist, mild atmosphere contains 578 centenarians, England 146, and Scotland, which is much colder, only 46, but a centenarian, it must be borne in mind, is much easier to find, than one whose life has touched "three centuries."

