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MATURITY

A certain degree of development prepares a man for the best work he is able to do. A certain amount of aging gives the good wine the flavor that enriches its taste. A certain stage of growth ripens the fruit making it fit for wholesome consumption. A certain length of time hardens the tree and prepares it for man's valued uses.

That level of progress at which man and other living organisms attain their highest value is maturity. Time alone does not produce it in human beings for while it assumes much of the responsibility for physical growth, it must be accompanied by other ingredients for the development of man's mind and spirit. It cannot be brought about by passive waiting regardless of the number of years to be so spent. It may only be born out of strenuous efforts to improve one's native strength and to expand the breadth of a latent vision. The indolent mind does not mature. Neither is it aware of the shortcomings of immaturity.

To be viable an immature society needs mature leaders. A mature society can be self-governing. It is not prone to adopt extreme measures. It is stable but not static. It is dynamic but not hasty.

There is a middle stage between immaturity and maturity in man and in society. It is a half-baked condition, neither childhood nor adulthood. It is the adolescent stage. It deserves the appellation of pretentious immaturity as contradistinguished to childhood which is innocent immaturity. Adolescence is a dangerous stage. It demands much in the name of freedom without acceding to the positive restraints of responsibility. — V. G. S.