An Essay of the Day

It's Never too Late to Live

By Dr. Brian Welbeck

SOME of us are haunted by Thoreau's saying: "The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation." We grind on through each day, weighed down by fear of insecurity, the burden of responsibility. Above all, we chain ourselves to a job—any job—which will promise some measure of security in old age. We forget the saying of Thoreau that "one does not live by bread alone."

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"And why do we have to say no?"

Because we have squandered the years of youth, the reward of enthusiasm.

How is this to be avoided? There are four fundamental rules which I have found have helped many.

1. NEVER BE AFRAID OF NEW ADVENTURES AT ANY AGE.

You never know what you can do till you try. A woman I knew was a housewife and a mother, but her husband was killed in an accident. She had to do it all, and she did it all. "I can do it," she said, and she did it.

2. DANCE IN ROME.

Rome has hundreds of statues and busts, and memorial plaques honouring great men of the past; but it has no monument to Dante, Shakespeare, or any other great Italian poet.

The site of the Roman Colosseum was an old quarry, and it is now a meadow. A young man asked his friend to show him where it was. "I'll tell you," said the young man, "I'm going to see now!"

A YOUNG man, called on an old gentleman farmer to ask him how it was he had become rich.

"Well," said the old man, "we worked all day, and while I'm tilling the fields we sit as well as save the oil."

And he blew out the light.

"You used to talk a lot to tell your story," said the young man, "I see now."

"How is your wife?"

"She's in heaven," replied the friend.

"Oh, I'm sorry," said the old man, "but I didn't mean to say that I was not the thing to say.

"But I said I was," replied the friend. "I mean, I'm glad."

And that was even worse. "Well, I'm surprised," said the old man.