

Preacher Says the Dangerous Age for Men Is 45

The Wild Oats of Youth Much Less Perilous Than Those of Later Years

By Fred B. Pitney

THE true explanation, the philosophical and scientific reason for bald-headed rows at musical comedies, has been discovered. And like all true discoveries—discoveries as distinguished from the evolution of theories—it is revolutionary. For the essence of the discovery is that man begins to sow his wild oats at forty-five.

The argument divides itself into three parts: The age from twenty-five to thirty is an age of construction and development; from thirty to forty-five is the age of disillusionment, and at forty-five, with all his ideals and illusions wrecked or thrown overboard, man begins to sow his wild oats.

There is something fascinating about this discovery. It is truly in consonance with the spirit of the age. Progress is its very nature. No longer need the Masé rake of eighteen sigh because the world is so young. He knows now that in twenty-seven years he also will be a youth and can mingle in the giddy whirl of baldheads on equal terms with the maddest of them.

The Halcyon Days

The venerable parent of thirty-two, father of six growing children, striving to make both ends meet on a salary of \$30 a week, can face the future in a new spirit. With each passing year, with each new line in his face, draw nearer the halcyon days, the care-free days, the golden days, the days of forty-five.

No more is the widening bald spot a badge of shame. One sees the tenacious bachelor, over whom the

contrary, it is illusions that are responsible for the feeble attempts of wild oats. They have the illusion that they are seeing life and the illusion that they are proving they have reached maturity, the illusion that they are showing themselves men of the world, the illusion us believe.

From twenty-five to thirty years is the constructive age, says Mr. Lauffer. And at twenty-five, when the angry bride threatens in a voice choked with tears to "go home to mother" does the tortured bridegroom do more than writhe? No. He does not. Or does she go? Not while her strength holds out to punch her meal ticket.

But at Forty-five?

But at forty-five? The tale is different then. The erstwhile bridegroom has passed through the age of construction. He has dreamed of buying a home in the country and digging in his own garden and sitting in the shade of his own fruit trees. He has done his part in construction of a family that now consists of eight human beings and a slovenly domestic. He has fought the annual deficit and slept for twenty years with the ghost of the semi-annual insurance premium. His bald spot extends from ear to ear, and, frankly, he is tired of the whole blamed business.

"Shall I be quite frank, Richard?" says Elsie Lindtner when she arrives at the dangerous age. Let us switch the form of address and make it "Shall I be quite frank, Elsie?" and continue the quotation.

"I am rather ashamed when I think of you, and I can honestly say that I never respected you more than to-day. But it could not have been otherwise. I wish in my heart of hearts that I had something to reproach you with, but I have nothing against you of any sort or kind. You have been a kind, faithful and delicate-minded friend to me, and I am not so lacking in delicacy that I do not appreciate this in my inmost heart. No other woman has ever claimed a corner of my heart. In a word, having considered the question all around, I am suffering simply from a nervous malady. Alas! it is incurable!"

From thirty to forty-five is the age of disillusionment, says Mr. Lauffer, and thereby stamps himself as an ardent optimist. Few and chosen of God are the men who keep their illusions until they are thirty. They may retain a few ideals, but they are under no illusion about the possibility of attaining the ideal, and the years from thirty to forty-five are not the age of disillusionment. They are the age of frantic endeavor to cling to slipping ideals. Man does not begin to sow his wild oats at forty-five because he is finally disillusioned, but because the last ideal has slipped from the grasp of the long since disillusioned man.

Illusions never kept any man from sowing wild oats. On the other hand, when the last ideal is gone the real struggle comes. All that a man has left is his common sense. Right and wrong mean nothing to him subjectively. Right and wrong are idealistic, and that point of view went from him with his ideals. There are two things he has to consider. The first is his health and his pocketbook. Will his health stand a life of more or less dissipation? How far can he go without facing poverty in his old age? The second thing to be considered is, Can he get away with it? Can he cover up his doings outside the sacred circle of the family so that they will not subsequently be attended with unpleasant publicity, even notoriety?

As Elsie Lindtner expresses it, "The more I reflect upon life, the more clearly I see that I have not laid out my talents to the best advantage. I have no sweet memories of infidelity; I have lived irreproachably—and now I am very tired."

"Life has passed me by; my hands are empty; now it is too late."

"Once happiness knocked at my door, and I, poor fool, did not rise to welcome it."

"I envy every country wench or servant girl who goes off with a lover. But I sit here waiting for old age."

When the Vampire Vamps

If man has enough common sense to know that at forty-five he has passed both the high point of his physical vigor and his years for successful exploration in new fields of production and that folly always discovers itself, even if only to a limited circle, he will keep going straight, and the most daring exposition of her fascinations inspired him only with curiosity. But

"How could it be otherwise? If a man took infinite pains to reveal himself to a wife or a mistress just as he really is she would think he was suffering from some incurable mental disease."

NO MORE is the bald spot a badge of shame. Son knows nothing of the longing for one night free from the phantom of the future—one little excursion into the lotus land unaccompanied by the grisly skeleton of responsibility



At Twoscore and Five the Age of Disillusionment Ends and Then Comes Recklessness

with and die, but father's take deep root and are a hardy plant.

Son fancies himself more than a little as he sits opposite the delicious little blonde at the secluded table behind the palms in the famous restaurant, spending a week's pay on one course that she sends back untouched. Son fancies himself, and the wise ones smile. Son is sowing his wild oats. But those baldheads that line both sides of Peacock Alley, no one smiles at them. There is serious business there. Father is sowing his wild oats.

"To all of us comes a time in life when we believe we can conquer or deceive time," says Elsie Lindtner.

Son thinks he experiences a thrill when he clasps the little blonde in his arms and joins the jazzing throng. Son doesn't know what a real thrill is. Green wood won't burn. But the fire eats into the heart of the seasoned log. So is it insures a \$8,000 automobile with instructions to the insurance agent that all correspondence in respect to the policy is to go to his office and not to his house and is to be marked personal? Father. Who is it carries \$28,000 fire and burglar insurance on an apartment on the upper West Side when any one can learn from the Telephone Directory that he lives on Sixty-fourth Street East? Father.

A Malady of Age

So says Elsie, advising her friend. A little later she has her own awakening.

"The worst of it is," she had quoted another friend, "that I know my madness will be only temporary. It is a malady incident to my age. One day it will pass away. One day I shall have got through the inevitable phase."

Elsie got through her inevitable phase—read carefully, father—and she wrote to the husband she had deserted:

"Come, then, dear friend, and I will give you such a welcome that you will not regret the journey."

His answer comes, and we see Elsie after she has read his letter.

"So he has dared!"

"So all his passion and his grief at parting were purely a part that he played! Who knows? Perhaps he was really glad to get rid of me."

"Ah, but this scorn and contempt!"

Take warning, father, that the Philadelphia philosopher does not lead you astray and that you do not have to say with Elsie Lindtner:

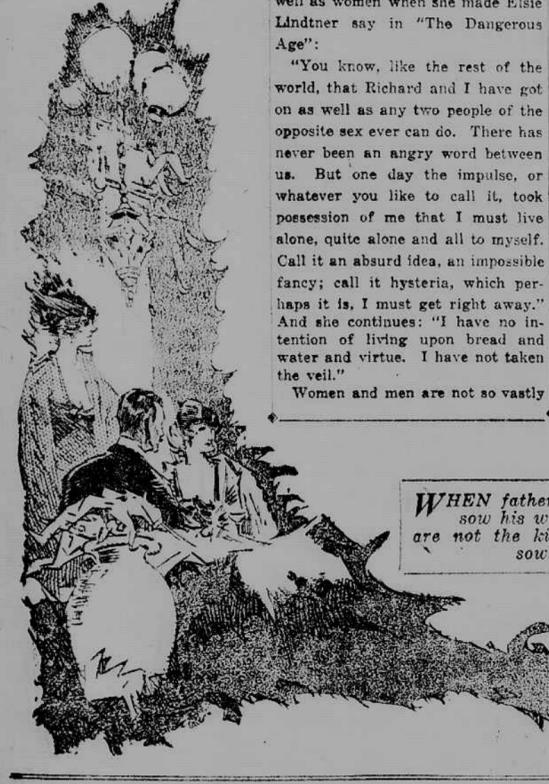
"How badly I have played my cards! I who thought myself so clever!"

Twenty Years Ahead

Son doesn't sow that kind of wild oats. Son is like the busy bee that flits from flower to flower. He is busy, oh yes, terribly busy, too busy to stop long at one fountain of sweetness. He doesn't know what a real thirst is. He knows nothing of the long, arid years of weary struggle, the years of bleak denial. He does not know what it is to turn his back on pleasure with grim determination. He knows nothing of the terrible longing for just one night off, one night free from the terrible phantasm of the future, one little excursion into the lotus land unaccompanied by the grisly skeleton of responsibility. All that is twenty years ahead of son.

And then comes Elsie Lindtner again. What was the matter with that woman? Why must she complete the picture for the Philadelphia philosopher? Why not let

FATHER'S wild oats are the fragments of his ideals



WHEN father sets out to sow his wild oats they are not the kind that son sows

Three Factors To Be Considered in Settling the Irish Question

By Frank Getty

IRELAND presents a problem. Three factions are striving for its solution—England, Ulster, and the rest of Ireland. Each has its own answers, none of which is satisfactory to the other two.

England proposes Home Rule, with reservations; the Irish of the South say "No," it is not enough. Those of the North are even more emphatic; it is too much. Ulster has a comparatively simple remedy, "Leave us alone." The South again says "No," ten thousand times "No"; England agrees that the present state of affairs is unsatisfactory. Sinn Féin proposes independence; Ulster offers to fight if such a proposal is considered; England vetoes it as impossible. And so on, "around the mulberry bush," like the three snakes of the hypothetical question trying to swallow one another.

Obviously, then, the one rash thing which an outsider could do

would be to propose a settlement—which proposal probably would bring down upon his head the combined wrath of all three factions. In point of fact, I, for one, can conceive of no workable solution at the present time. But of one thing I am certain: the final solution to this complex problem will be based upon sound economic reasoning before everything else. A country may wave its flag and shout until its neighbors are deaf. But its eventual prosperity will always come back to roost upon the firm bases of trade, commerce and industry.

Let us examine the claims of each faction involved in the Irish tangle from the economic point of view, leaving aside entirely all questions of religion, politics, sentiment or past wrongs. This, of course, is a thing no Irishman will do; he will not discuss the economics of the situation without bringing in some other phase of the difficulty.

First of all, there is the British government's proposal for a settlement—the new two-parliament Home Rule bill outlined by Premier Lloyd George just before Christmas, which will come before Parliament when it reconvenes this year. There is, of course, the Home Rule bill of 1914, which, if it is not superseded, will become effective after the final ratification of the final peace, but no one wants that now, Lloyd George himself declared. In fact, the present bill was designed to take its place.

This new bill had a most unfavorable reception in every part of Ireland. The chief objection from the South of Ireland from an economic point of view arose over the question of taxation. Ireland now contributes, involuntarily, £18,000,000 to the imperial exchequer. The British government proposed a joint exchequer board to settle the rate of contribution for the future and the question of taxable capacity. Control of income, excess profits and super-taxes was to rest with Great Britain, together with control of cus-

oms and excise and the postoffice. The two parliaments were to have taxation powers somewhat similar to those possessed by state legislatures in the United States. It was proposed to give back to Ireland money raised by taxation in excess of the amount agreed upon as her fair contribution.

Nationalist, Sinn Féin and "Republican" Ireland unite in denouncing this proposal. Why, they ask, should they pay taxes to England? Why should they pay from their pockets for a war which England fought without the sanction or blessing of most Irishmen? Why should they annually contribute £18,000,000 for which they could find much better use right at home? Reaction of the entire annual taxation of Ireland by £18,000,000 would mean freedom from financial burdens to every Irishman. Or the money could be used to develop home industries.

"A country which does not control its own taxes is never free," said a prominent Nationalist during a discussion which we had on the subject in Dublin. "Your ancestors in the States went to war over much the same sort of proposition. Taxation is the backbone of oppression; it is the economic weapon of the stronger nation which strangles the smaller all hope of national development. The more Ireland makes the more England takes."

"She doesn't treat Canada in this way. She knows better than to try. Canada has control of her own taxation and contributes just what she pleases to the imperial exchequer."

"England must give Ireland control of all her own taxation; then, and then only, will Home Rule be good enough, even for those of us who do not want to see separation from England occur."

It would not be fair to go any further without saying that the Unionists of Ulster raise no such objection to contributing to the imperial exchequer.

"We are Irishmen, but we are British," they say in Belfast. "We

are ready and proud to bear our share of the war debt. We don't ask that our load be lessened by a single penny. Belfast is going to work to make more money that the debt may be more easily paid off."

The Ulster objection is to anything which, moving in the direction of separation from England, will weaken the firm economic bond between the two countries. Ulster's one great market, practically her only market, is England. Belfast is a great commercial city, but her industries are essentially dependent upon English support.

There is an influential element of patriotic Irishmen in the South who favor what they call Dominion Home Rule, with Ireland controlling her own finances. This, they assert, is at once a simple, fair and practicable solution of all the difficulties. Yet they overlook Ulster. Not that they care; no one with the spirit of the South cares what happens to Ulster.

Economically considered, as well

along all right under the guidance of Westminster?

Of all the proposed solutions, that from Ulster is the least likely of permanent adoption, either by Britain or Ireland. But it is represented by the present state of affairs, and as long as the rest cannot agree upon what form the demanded and offered change shall take, the Ulster solution has the floor.

Is an independent Ireland economically practicable? I asked that question of every one I met in Ireland. And the South is solid in its "Yes!" But up North they waived their pride as Irishmen and said they doubted it.

Looking at the matter broadly, and overlooking a lot of annoying details which always pop up in any discussion of Irish affairs to confound the writer, we may say that, in event of Irish independence, Ulster would suffer economically unless she could get into perfect harmony with the South, an extremely doubtful supposition.