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Symptoms of being 35.



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SYMPTOMS OF BEING 35

**OTHER BOOKS
BY MR. LARDNER**

GULLIBLE'S TRAVELS

MY FOUR WEEKS IN FRANCE

TREAT 'EM ROUGH

THE REAL DOPE

OWN YOUR OWN HOME

THE YOUNG IMMUGRUNTS

/



WHEN a man has got a legal wife and 4 and no/100 children what does he care if he is 35 or double that amt. Besides which they claim that 35 is about the average of all grown ups in the world. If I was born above the average would I keep it a secret? Don't be silly.

Symptoms of Being 35

By
RING W. LARDNER

SILHOUETTES BY
HELEN E. JACOBY



at
INDIANAPOLIS
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ON reaching my dottage I ain't
makeing no complaints to the
management and I'm willing to
accomodate with a few rules which
has enabled me to reach the age of 35
annums and which if stuck to faith-
ful will bring you the same results.

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Symptoms of Being 35

THE other night one of my friends whose name is Legion got me on the telephone some way another and wanted I should come over and call, but that is all I done the last 3 or 4 times I had went over there and it costs a lot of money even in a 4 bit limit. So I said no that I was busy on a book which I had promised my publisher I would write it.

“What is it about” says Legion.

So I told him “How it feels to be 35.”

“That guy must think you got a good memory” says Legion and hung up on me.

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Well friends 35 is how young I am no matter how old I look, but I am so use to haveing smart Alex make wise cracks when I tell them my age that it don't have no more effect on me now than the 6 day bicycle race. Only I can't figure why they think I would lie about it like I was trying to pose as a boy chess marvel or something. When a man has got a legal wife and 4 and no one hundredths children what does he care if he is 35 or double that amt. Besides which they claim that 35 is about the average of all the grown ups in the world. If I was above the average would I keep it a secret? Don't be silly.

And don't judge a person by their hair gents. Many a man that can remember the first Ford has got more

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foliage on their egg than myself and also I know several ball players in the big league to-day that is anywheres from 5 to 30 yrs. younger than the present writer that when the fish applauds them for makeing a 2 handed catch with 1 hand, you wonder why they don't take off their cap. Personally I am not sensitive about my plummage. When my features got to the decision that one of them would half to retract all I done was thank God they picked the forehead and not the chin. The only hardship connected with pyorrhoea of the scalp is trying to act suprised when the barber says you are looseing your hair.

But I guess it ain't only the loss of a few ebony ringlets that makes me look senile. It seems like I was over

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estimated long before I begin to molt. For inst. I can recall when I was 16 and had a thatch on my dome like a virtuoso and I used to pal around with a boy who we will call Geo. Dougan because that was his name and Geo. was going on 21. Well this was in Niles, Mich., in the days when they sold 6 $\frac{7}{8}$ beer in vases and for \$.20 you could get enough to patrol 4th St. serenading true music lovers of the opposing sex. In them helleyon days 1 of the few things that was vs. the law was selling it to minors and 2 or 3 of the retail mchts. around town was pretty strick and time and again I and Geo. would be out shopping and go in a store and order 2 vats and Dave or Punk or who ever it happened to be would set one up for



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me to knock over and then give Geo. a wise cracking smile and ask him would he like a bottle of white pop. Incidentally I had a taste of that lucius ambrosia at a ball game once and if the penalty for selling honest old beer to minors was a \$100 fine why 2 to 14 yrs. in a meat grinder would be mild for a guy that sells white pop on the theory that its a drink.

Well Geo. would say "Aw come on Dave I am older than him." But you couldn't fool Dave and the result was that we would half to take our custom down to Pigeon's where everybody that had a dime was the same age and the only minors was the boys that tried to start a charge acct.

I must hand it to Geo. for one

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thing. No matter how sore it made him to get turned down he never told them the truth about me. And they wouldn't of believed him if he had of. No more than you birds believe me now.

But now in regards to this book: When the publisher asked me to write it up I said I didn't see how more than only a few people would be interested because they was only a few that is this old. So he told me that as a matter of fact pretty near everybody in the world that can read is either 35 or a few mos. one way or the other and if I didn't think that was so to go and look it up in a book. So I looked up in the encyclopedia and they was nothing in there like he said but I found out a whole lot of other

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things that was news to me and maybe the reader don't know them neither so I will write them down.

In the 1st. place it says that most people dies when they are 1 yr. old and the 1st. 10 yrs. is the most fatalist. But if they's a 100 thousand people that can manage to get to be 10 yrs. old why then 749 of them is pretty libel to die the next yr. After that the older you get the longer you live up to when you are 59 and then you can just about count on liveing 14 and seven-tenths yrs. more. In other wds. if you ain't one of the 749 that crokes between 10 and 11 why you are safe till about June of the yr. when you are 73. So a person is a sucker to try and take care of themself at my age and from now on I

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am going to be a loose fish and run wild.

Out in Benton Harbor, Mich. however, near where I use to live, they have got a sex that calls themselves the Holy Terrors or something that claims you live as long as you are good and as soon as you do wrong you die. But I notice that they all wear a beard so as the encyclopedia can't tell if they are 73 or 21.

Another thing it says in the book is that figures compiled in Norway and Sweden shows the death rate amongst bachelors is a lot more than amongst married men even includeing murder. So anybody that is between 11 and 73 yrs. old and got a wife is practically death proof especially if you are a Swede.



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But all that is either here or there. The idiar is to tell how it feels to be my age and I may as well get to it. Well in the 1st. place I am speaking for myself only. I don't know how the other 35 yr. olders feels about it and don't care. Probably the most of them don't feel near as old as the writer. Laughter is supposed to keep a man young but if its forced laughter it works the opp. When a guy is named Ring W. and is expected to split their sides when ever somebody asks if your middle name is Worm which is an average of 365 times per annum over a period of 35 annums, why it can't help from telling on you. Or it don't lighten the wgt. of the yrs. none to half to snicker every time they say Ring give me a

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ring or Ring why ain't you a ring master in Ringling Bros. And yet a number of birds has asked me if that was my real name or did I assume it. They would probably ask the kaiser if he moved to Holland to be near the tulips.

I suppose that on the morning of their 21st. birthday the right kind of a American citizen wakes up full of excitement and says to themselves "Now I am of age and can vote and everything." And when they come to what I often call the 35th. mile stone they are even more smoked up with the thought that now they are eligible to be President and go around all day stoop shouldered with the new responsibility.

Well I don't recall how I woke up

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the day I was 21 if at all but my last birthday is still green and sour in my memory. I spent the most of it in Mineola signing mortgages and if I thought of the White House it was just to wonder if it would do any good to write and tell President Wilson about the Long Island R. R.

At the present writeing I have got so use to being 35 that I don't know if it feels any different from 34 or 33. But I can at lease state that being 35 don't feel nothing like being under 30. For inst. when the telephone rings now days I am scared to death that its somebody asking us to go somewheres for dinner or somewheres. Six yrs. ago I was afraid it wasn't. At 29 home was like they say on the vaudeville stage, a place to go

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when all the other joints was closed up. At 35 its a place you never leave without a loud squawk.

A man don't appreciate their home till you are up around par for 9 holes. Under 30 you think of it as a dump where you can't pick out what you want to eat like roast Vt. turkey or a filet mignon or some of that prune fed muskrat a la Biltmore. If Kathleen decides in the A. M. that you are going to crave spare ribs at night why you can either crave spare ribs at night or put on a hunger strike that won't get you no more sympathy than the hiccups.

In them ribald days home is just a kind of a pest where you half to choke down breakfast or they will think something ails you and talk about



WHEN the telephone rings now days I am scared to death that its somebody asking us to go somewheres for dinner or somewheres. Six yrs. ago I was afraid it wasn't. At 29 home was like they say on the vaudeville stage, a place to go when all the other joints was closed up. At 35 its a place you never leave without a loud squawk.

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sending for a Dr. And 1 or 2 evenings per wk. when you can't think of no reason to go out, its where you half to set around and wait for 9 o'clock so as you begin to talk about going to bed and sometimes things gets so desperate that you half to read a book or something.

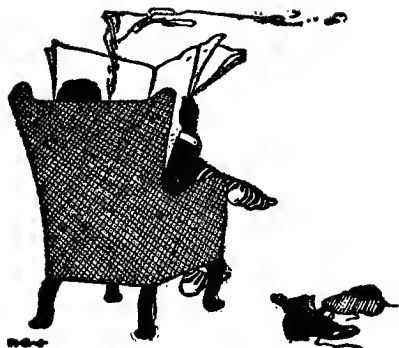
But at 35 you spell it with a big H. Its where you can take off your shoes. Its where you can have more soup. Its where you don't half to say nothing when they's nothing to say. Its where they don't wait till the meal is all over and then give you a eye dropper full of coffee raw. Its where you don't half to listen. Its where they don't smear everything with cheese dressing. Its where you can pan everybody without it going no fur-

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ther. Its where they know you like doughnuts and what you think about a banana.

When you was 29 you didn't care for the band to play Home sweet Home. It was old stuff and a rotten tune any way. Now you hope they won't play it neither. Its a pretty tune but it makes you bust out crying.

Bud Kelland that lives over to Port Washington wrote a piece for a magazine a wile ago where he said in it that it kind of shocked him to find out that young people didn't act like he was one of them no more. Well he ain't but it took the old gaffer a long time to find it out. Here he is pretty near 39 and I guess the old Methusalem wants folks to hide I Mary Mac Lane when he comes in the rm.



BUT at 35 you spell Home with a big H. Its where you can take off your shoes. Its where you can have more soup. . . . Its where you don't half to listen. . . . Its where you can pan everybody without it going no further. . . . Its where they know you like doughnuts and what you think about a banana.

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Well it was 5 or 6 yrs. ago when I realized that I was past my nonages as they say. It come to me all of a sudden that the only compliments I had for a long wile was what a pretty tie you got or something. Nothing about my natural charms no more. It was an egg's age since anybody had called me to 1 side and whispered "I got a T. L. for you. Gertie thinks your ears is immense."

I seen then that I wasn't no longer a larva and I guess maybe it hurt at first. But its like falling hair or the telephone service or anything else. When you have lived with it a wile you don't mind. Which is just as well because they ain't a wk. passes when you wouldn't get touched on the raw if they was any raw left.

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Like for inst. a few wks. back I was up in Boston where I got a young and beautiful sister in law. When it come time to part from she and her husband she kissed me 6 times which was suppose to be once for me and once apiece for the Mrs. and 4 kiddies. Well I thought it was pretty nice and got kind of excited about it till I looked at her husband to see how he took it. He took it without batting an eye. To him it was like as if she was kissing an old cab horse on a bet for the benefit of the Red Cross. And when I had left and they was alone together, instead of lepping at her throat with a terrible curse he probably says "Janey, you're a good game gal," and she give him a kiss that meant something.



A FEW wks. back I was up in Boston where I got a young and beautiful sister in law. When it come time to part from she and her husband she kissed me 6 times which was suppose to be once for me and once apiece for the Mrs. and 4 kiddies. Well I thought it was pretty nice and got kind of excited about it till I looked at her husband to see how he took it. He took it without batting an eye. To him it was like kissing an old cab horse on a bet for the benefit of the Red Cross.

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Now an incidence like this would of spoilt my whole trip if I didn't look at it in a sensible way which is to say to yourself, "Well if I wasn't in the Sears and yellow I wouldn't of got them 6 kisses. And 6 kisses is $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen kisses in any language."

Or for inst. out on the golf course. Suppose I and Grant Rice is playing with some young whipper snapper like say Jack Wheeler and they's only 1 caddy for the 3 of us. "Take them two" says Jack pointing to my and Grant's bags but the caddy has all ready took them any way as soon as he found out which ones belonged to which. Or when one of my young brother in laws is around the house and I come in the rm. and they are setting in the easy chair, why they

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jump up like food shot from guns and say "Here take this chair."

All and all when you get hardened to it they's many advantages in reaching your dottage. When they's 7 passengers for a 7 passenger car its never you that has to take one of them little torture seats. When your brother in law is here on a visit and the Mrs. thinks it would be nice to have a fire in the fire place, you ain't the one that has got to ruin his clothes. Yes friends the benefits is many fold but if them 1/2 dozen kisses and a few stray others pretty near as good was all, why you could still think to yourself Youth may get good service, but 35 ain't makeing no complaints to the management neither.

As for the gen. symptoms of 35 and

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vicinity as I have found them and not speaking for nobody only myself you understand, the following points may interest science :

1. The patient sometimes finds himself and one lady the only people left at the table and all the others is danceing. They seems to be nothing for it but to get up and dance. You start and the music stops and the young buddies on the flr. claps their hands for a encore. The patient claps his hands too but not very loud and he hopes to high heaven the leader will take it in a jokeing way.

2. For some reason another its necessary to find some old papers and in going through the trunk the patient runs acrost a bunch of souvenirs and keep sakes like a note a gal wrote

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him in high school, a picture of himself in a dirty football suit, a program of the 1907 May festival in South Bend and etc. "Why keep this junk" he says and dumps them all in the waste basket.

3. The case develops nausea in the presents of all story tellers except maybe Irvin Cobb and Riley Wilson and Bert Williams. Any others has to work pretty fast to get him cornered. Violent chills attends the sound of those saddest wds. of tongue or pen "I don't know if you heard this one or not but it struck me funny. It seems they was a woman went in a drygoods store in Detroit to buy some towels. Stop me if you heard it before." You couldn't stop them with big Bertha. The best funny



THE case develops nausea in the presents of all story tellers except maybe Irvin Cobb and Riley Wilson and Bert Williams. Any others has to work pretty fast to get him cornered. . . . The best funny storys is Balzac's because they are in a book and you don't half to buy it. But when you get up vs. one of these here voluntary stag entertainers you either got to listen and laugh or they put you down as a dumb bell.

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story is Balzac's because they are in a book and you don't have to buy it. But when you get up vs. one of these here voluntary stag entertainers you either got to listen and laugh or they put you down as a dumb bell.

4. The invalid goes to a ball game and along comes the last $\frac{1}{2}$ of the 14th. innings and the score is 1 and 1 and the 1st. guy up makes a base hit. The patient happens to look at his watch and it says 11 minutes to 6 and if he leaves the park right away he can make the 6:27 home where as if he waits a few min. he will have to take the 6:54. Without no hesitation he leaves the park right away and makes the 6:27.

5. The subject is woke up at 3 A. M. by the fire whistle. He snuffles

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but can't smell no smoke. He thinks well it ain't our house and goes back to sleep.

6. He sets down after breakfast to read the paper. The mail man comes and brings him 3 letters. One of them looks like it was a gal's writing. He reads the paper.

7. He buys a magazine in April and reads the first instalment of a misery serial. The instalment winds up with the servants finding their master's body in bed and his head in the ash tray. Everything pts. to the young wife. Our patient forgets to buy the May number.

8. Somebody calls up and says they are giveing a party Thursday night for Mabel Normand and can you come. Our hero says he is sorry

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but he will be in Washington on business. He hasn't no more business in Washington than Gov. Cox.

9. They's a show in town that you got to see like Frank Craven or "Mecca." "It's a dandy night" says the Mrs. "Shall we drive in or take the train?" "We will take the train" says our hero.

These is a few of the symptoms as I have observed them and as I say I am speaking for just myself and maybe I am a peculiar case. They may not be another 35 yr. older in the world that is affected the same way and in fact I know several suffers about that age which I am as different than as day and night. Take Jess Willard for inst. He was somewheres around 35 in July 1919 and Dempsey

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knocked him down 7 times in one rd. He wouldn't do that to me, not 7 times he wouldn't. Or look at Ty Cobb. Do you think they would get me to play center field and manage a ball club for \$30,000? Or would Jim Thorpe's brother in law look on him as too frail to hobble down in the basement and get a few sticks of wood?

On the other hand they might be 2 or 3 brother eagles in the mediocer 30s that is even more mildewed than me, but I am afraid they's a whole lot more of them feels like a colt. They take care of themselves. [When they get up in the A. M. they take a cold plunge and then hang by their eye teeth on a hook in the closet while they count 50 in Squinch. And noons



WHEN they get up in the A. M. they take a cold plunge and then hang by their eye teeth on a hook in the closet while they count 50 in Squinch. . . . I can't compete with these babies. I slice a few golf balls in season but bet. Nov. and May the only exercise I get or want to get is twice a wk. when I take the buttons out of shirt A and stick them in shirt B.

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when they come back from their lunch of hot milk and ferns, they roll over on the office rug 10 times without bending their shin.]

I can't compete with these babies. I slice a few golf balls in season but bet, Nov. and May the only exercise I get or want to get is twice a wk. when I take the buttons out of shirt A and stick them in shirt B.

They's still another crowd yet that renews their youth by going back every yr. to commencement or a class reunion or something. Well I don't know if I want to renew my youth or not. Leave bad enough alone is my slogum. And in the 2d. place I don't half to go nowheres to a class reunion. I could hold it in the bath tub. I was the only one that graduated when I did as it was in March of my fresh-

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man yr. and they didn't seem to be haveing no commencement exercises for nobody else. I guess I must have been one of these here infantile proteges like that 11 mos. old junior they got up to Columbia.

No book of this kind would be complete without shooting a few wds. of unwanted advice at my youngers and betters. For inst. John D. tells the boys how to build up a fortune and John Jones tells them how to rise from a white wings to a steeple jack. So it looks like it was up to me to tell them how to get to be what I am, 35 yrs. old.

Well my lads they's 4 rules that I made and have stuck to them and I think you will find they'll bring you the same results. The 1st. rule is don't die the 1st. yr. The 2d. rule is

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don't be one of the 749 that dies when they are 11. The 3d rule is don't pick a quarrel with a man like Dempsey. And the 4th. and last rule is marry a girl like Sue.

In explanations of that last rule I will say that the one I married ain't Sue but the name don't make no differents if she is the right kind of a gal. And the reason I say that is because its customary in these intimate capital I talks to throw in a paragraph of blurb about the little woman. What ever success a man has had he has got to pretend he owes it to Her. So if they's any glory to be gleaned out of my success in reaching 35 and looking even older why she can have it.

THE END



