

At What Age Is a Man At His Best Mentally?

An oft-repeated question at all times and in most places has been and is, of what period of a man's life is he at his best, mentally? Than this few subjects have been more extensively talked and written about in recent years. Not long ago was it that Dr. Ostler, formerly a professor in the University of Chicago, started the world by his bold assertion that best men are any good after they are 40 years of age and that all should be chloroformed at 60. With the first part of the statement many speakers and writers partially agree, some going to the extent of saying that most men at 40 have passed the zenith of their career and rarely achieve after that time of life. Opinions on the subject differ, however, quite as widely as do the views of men generally on any question of sufficient importance as to be universally discussed.

Locally, opinion respecting the period of man's best mentality is perhaps as divided as elsewhere, as may be seen from the following symposium at views heretofore gleaned from many men of affairs, professional men and educators, who given in the order in which they were approached on the subject:

Prof. W. R. Tibbals (mining man)—Some men are young after they are 60. This was noticeably the case with the late President of the Bank of Oberlin College, who was one of the most active and valuable men in the state of Ohio after he was 60 years old.

J. E. Dooly (capitalist)—The average man passes his prime at 40. However, my prime will not be reached until I am 100.

President L. S. Hills (banker)—Thirty

are to be considered—parentage, for in-

stance, ancestral traits. This explains to a degree why at some men are younger than others at 50.

Rev. F. H. Short (First Methodist church)—It depends on the man and on the work. Naturally, in the regular course of events, between 20 and 45 is a physical limit; but in the professions, a man does his best work between 40 and 50 years of age. The physician and doctor ought to be at their best between 40 and 55.

M. H. Walker (banker)—It depends on the man. The average man ought to be in his prime at 45, while some men do not reach their limit until late in life. It seems to me I am just as well able to get around and do my work as ever was.

Joseph William Taylor, (Under-treasurer)—I think that with care a man's powers ought to last until he is 60 before they begin to wane, provided he is careful to treat his body right.

John E. Smith (banker)—At 45 the man is still in his prime, able to adjust himself to circumstances up to the age of 40 I would say, than after that period, but his judgment and wisdom is more mature and therefore more perfect between that period and 60.

A. W. Hite (banker)—A man ought to do his best ticks at 20, but the judgment of a healthy man is best at 70 because of his experience. An unhealthy man cannot be expected to count for much, as his mind is naturally affected and biased to wrong health.

Dr. A. M. Stevenson (president Westminster college)—Between the age of 40 and 90 years, although some men at 60 are better than some men at 30. Habit and good health are strong factors in this matter.

President J. C. Cosgriff (banker)—It depends on the man. Some men develop early, with judgment formed in early life. As a general principle a man's judgment improves as he grows older.

James T. Hammond (attorney)—It depends greatly on the individual. Some mature earlier than others, and lose their powers earlier in life. A man's habits count for a good deal, as well as whether he overworks while it is early life.

Prof. William M. Stewart (U. of U.)—I should say that the average man is at his best between 35 and 45 years of age. There are notable exceptions either way. Some men have wrought most nobly at 60, others have reached their zenith at 20. However, as the majority of men are strongest physically during the first 40 years, according to the five years beyond two more, I should say that period would be the best mentally.

John M. Young (ex-chief of police)—If a man has conserved his physical energy, his mental powers should be at their best at from 45 to 55 years of age. He does not cease to acquire knowledge up to that time, and if he has forgotten anything it is the foolishness of youth and the more or less unprofitable experiences up to the period of 40. Not until he is 40 is a man成熟 financially, as a rule, and the saying goes, and it is perfectly true that he best succeeds in other phases of life after that age, and there is no good reason why he should not retain his full mental powers up to say, 55.

Willard Done—It is impossible to give a general rule as to the age at which a professional man is at his best. I think the nearest statement would be that it is that period when the fire and strength of youth and the ripeness and experience of age are most harmoniously blended. This comes in different degrees with different men. If a man husband his resources, and used wisely his opportunities, he may retain his hold on vigor until he has reached the maturity of 55 or 60 years, or even a greater age. Other men are more prodigal of their strength, and their greatest ability may be manifested at 40 or 45. But I think it is exceptional for the greatest efficiency to be reached at an earlier age than 40, or retained beyond 60. If the law of averages applies at all in this connection, might be safe to state that the years between 45 and 55 would embrace the ideal condition in the case of most men.

Willard Young (president of the L. D. S. University)—The average man's best days are from 30 to 40 years. I should say, and exceptions to this rule would be comparatively rare.

Judge Charles S. Zane—Well that is a question that I would not care to answer without giving it some thought. It is difficult to answer for the reason that some men at 30 are as good as others at 60. It depends on vitality to some extent, and that depends on conditions of birth, and the care which men take of themselves. It would seem that mental activity rather than prolonged inactivity tends to preserve the mind powers. Freedom from worry and the preservation of calmness also tends to preserve them. But it often depends greatly on the equipment given at birth. Some of the brightest legal minds I ever knew were in an excellent state of preservation, and their powers were seemingly undiminished at 70 and even 80.

Captain G. Samuel Paul, (former chief police officer) would say that the best working period of a man's life is between 30 and 50, though as to what time a man is conscious of failing power would depend, it seems to me, on the kind of life he has led in his young days. For my own part, although I am now approaching 74 I did

not realize any weakening until I was past 60.

Ex-Governor A. L. Thomas (Postmaster)—I think it depends on the care a man takes of himself to a great extent.

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