

The Joy of Being Fifty

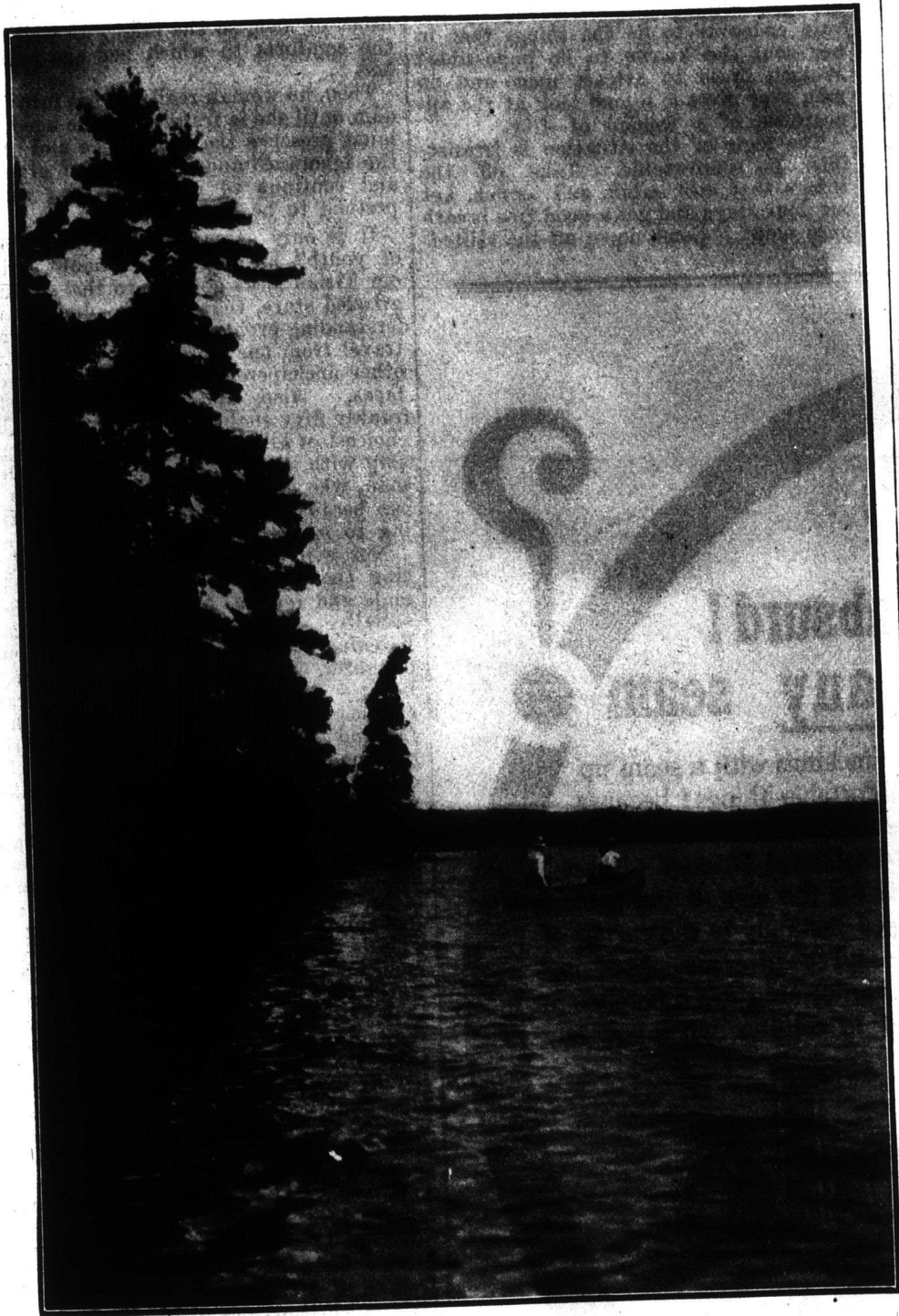
By Elizabeth M. Gilmer.

The most mischievous popular doctrine of the day is the cult of youth to which women give themselves, body and soul. To try to look girlish and to attempt to deceive people into thinking that they possess a few less years than they do, has become more than a fad with them. It is a religion on whose altars they offer up their pleasures, their comforts, their health, and even their lives.

Everywhere we see women growing old before their time by trying to keep young, for the pursuit of youth is a strenuous undertaking, made up of bitter self-sacrifices and hard work and a mental concentration on one subject that is bound to tell on even the most robust physique. Unfortunately, the constitu-

and friends. She goes to banquets where her mouth waters for the rich foods and yet she sits up and heroically nibbles along on a bit of zwieback and a mess of loathsome spinach that are guaranteed not to be fattening. For fit is synonymous with age.

Nor does starvation end the agonies that are endured by these pilgrims to the sacred font of youth. The miseries they undergo in the form of exercises no tongue can tell, for the way to the El Dorado when a woman never gets beyond twenty-five years old, and can wear a one-piece lingerie gown without looking as if she needed to have a public guardian appointed for her, is a hard one to travel.



Looking towards McIntosh from Pine Point, East of Winnipeg.

tions of few women have been built strong enough to withstand the labor entailed by attaining perpetual juvenility and so, everywhere, we are called on to mourn the ravages that the worship of youth has made on its devotees.

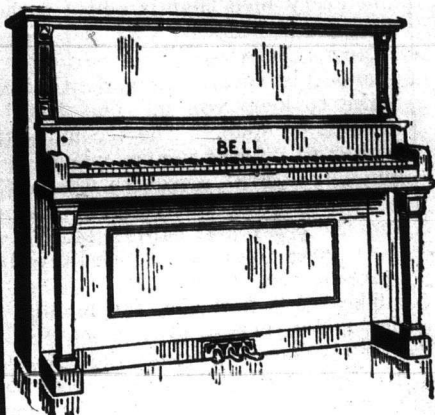
When you observe a woman with a haggard face and a lean and hungry look, and a pained expression, or when you note, with pity, that one walks as if she had some malformation of the hip joint, think not that the hand of affliction has been laid heavily upon her and that she is the victim of some fell mental or physical malady. She is merely trying to keep young. She is reducing. She is encased in a straight-front instrument of torture. She has become a monomaniac obsessed by one idea, the idea of trying to look in the early thirties instead of the late forties.

Weep for her, for her sufferings are great. Her table groans with food and yet in the midst of plenty she is enduring all the pangs of starvation. She prepares delicious dinners for her family

It is the Via Crucis; but women tread it without a murmur. If you could peep into the bedroom of nine-tenths of the fat, grizzle-haired, middle-aged women you know, you would behold them, with the light of a heroic endeavor and cold cream on their countenances, painfully and pantingly, with suffering untold, doing their exercises to keep young just as religiously as they say their prayers.

Why any woman who has arrived at the age of discretion should see her ideal in a bread-and-butter miss and undertake to understudy her, is one of the mysteries of femininity that nobody can fathom. There is really nobody on earth who is more of a bore than a properly brought up young girl. You can amuse yourself with her for half an hour, watching her little tricks as you would dangle a ball before a sprightly puppy, but after that, heaven help those who must endure her society! Sweet sixteen has no conversation, no knowledge of the world, no background—nothing but hard, tasteless, flavorless youth.

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