

THE CASE AGAINST THE YOUNGER GENERATION

SENSATIONAL CRITICISM of our young people has been reaching us from time to time from the churches, the colleges, and numerous scandalized members of the younger generation itself. If the newspapers are less outspoken than a year ago, when *THE DIGEST* investigated these matters by questionnaire, the change appears to be not so much a result of improvement in our young people as of indifference toward conditions that have lost their "news punch." To many an observer this indifference is alarming, as it seems to indicate that we are acquiescing in what such observers call a moral and spiritual revolution whose consequences can hardly be other than subversive of the principles upon which manners and morals are based. Indeed, "revolution" is not the harshest word we hear. One critic prefers to term it "devolution." Another calls it "devilution."

The volume, as well as the manifest sincerity of such comment, has indicated that a second investigation would be of service, especially as certain marked advantages seemed to attend the experiment. Onlookers have had a year to revise their conclusions. The young people have had a year to mend their ways—or refuse to. Moreover, the subject is no longer startling. *THE DIGEST* will not be accused of taking it up simply because it has the tang of novelty, nor will readers be tempted for the same reason to overrate the gravity of the charges made. Still again, the lapse of a year enables us to judge whether the evils complained of are merely temporary—a phase of moral and spiritual upheaval after war—or a general and lasting renunciation of ideals.

Accordingly, *THE DIGEST* has questioned high-school principals, college presidents, college deans, the editors of college newspapers and periodicals, and also the editors of religious weeklies, addressing to each of them the following letter:

A year ago *THE DIGEST* gathered opinions from all over the country on dress, dancing, manners, and general moral standards, especially as these matters affected young people. The material was presented under the heading "Is the Younger Generation in Peril?" and aroused considerable comment from all quarters. There does not seem, at the present time, to be nearly so much discussion of this subject as there was a year ago, but of that little a large part is unfavorable.

Will you be kind enough to tell us whether, in your opinion, there has been a change, and, if so, in what the change consists? Are conditions worse or better? What are the causes? If remedies are in order, what remedies would you suggest? Your opinion, given to all America through our 1,500,000 copies, with

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In place of this he is busily engaged in attending social functions and otherwise amusing himself.

There is a good deal of drinking and gambling going on. More than there was some ten or twelve years ago.

The co-eds are taking up cigaret-smoking in increasing numbers. They continue to dress extremely, and to dance more than is good for them. The percentage of "bad ones" is higher than ten years ago.

The facial expression of a graduating class is *hardened* and lacking in that peculiar quality which we call a fine, open, honest face.

"The greatest problem we are facing to-day is immorality in our whole social structure," says Mrs. Eva M. Blue, dean of women at Gooding College (Gooding, Ia.). She adds:

This is not the fault of youth. Can we expect young men and young women to rise above the conditions with which society has surrounded them, in the way of jazz music, modern dance-halls, public swimming-pools, auto joy riding, luxury and freedom, the sensual and suggestive movies, where they learn to see nakedness and where immorality does not seem so bad? All of these things have a tendency to rouse the lowest passions, and instil ideas of materialism, of free thought, and



"FLAPPEROLATRY."

Rockwell D. Hunt, Dean of the Graduate School of the University of Southern California, gives this name to a "pernicious near-cult" which presents what "amounts often to a challenge to young men to exceed all the speed limits of immodesty."

free love, and the spirit of—"it is all right to do what you want to, if you can get away with it."

These are the forces which are breaking down high moral standards and all that is sacred, and causing a general restlessness and recklessness, and the tendency to let physical impulses control the actions.

All these distractions lessen vitality and lower the power to resist temptations.

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Constant contact with these things do most certainly deaden the powers to know right from wrong.

The results are indecent exposure in dress, disregard of the common conventionalities of society, a familiarity in relationships of young men and young women, cigaret-smoking by both men and women, Sunday desecration, epidemics of murder and lawlessness, the increasing number of inmates in industrial and reform schools, and in women's rescue homes, and a larger number of hasty and tragic marriages and divorces.

H. S. Premier, dean of theology at Washington Missionary College, believes that "The worst in morals is yet to come." He quotes St. Paul in his letter to youth, II Tim. 3 : 13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." On condition that her name be not mentioned, the dean of an Eastern college for women, writes, in a hardly less condemnatory vein:



"MORAL CHAOS."

J. I. Riddle, a high school principal at Attalla, Alabama, calls upon American civilization to awaken from its "imperiled sleep over the pit of moral chaos before it is too late."

I am a woman who was born immediately after the Civil War, and at thirteen and fourteen was still going through what we then called a reconstruction period. The older people were somewhat alarmed at the freedom of the younger ones. As I look back over that time, I see that the only freedom we were really allowed was the privilege of walking a few blocks from our own homes with a young man to some well-chaperoned dance. We were also allowed to go horseback riding. Moonlight excursions with several chaperones were the most advanced liberty that was allowed us. We had had no such thing as sex hygiene taught us and we never would have dreamed of mentioning this subject to young men of our acquaintance. We were extremely careful never to cross our legs or to stand with our feet spread wide apart. We were imprest

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with the idea by our elders that these things were vulgar and a sign of ill-breeding. We were also told that we should not allow the young men with whom we associated to handle or kiss us, as nice girls did not do these things, and nice men did not wish that kind of girl for a wife. A man wanted a girl for his wife who had not been kissed by other men. I do not believe that many girls were given the reasons why they should not do these things.

To-day we have the sex question openly discuss in mixed classes. We have men professors teaching biology to girls in the plainest and most advanced fashion. There is no secret of the human body or of sex that is not pretty well known to the average girl of sixteen. I have had girls of eighteen tell me that sex was a subject of conversation between the modern girl and young men. I would almost believe from observation that sex was a dead issue were it not that we still have marriage, which is the ultimate end of sex. I am not prepared to say that the modern girl is any less moral than we were, but I do say that there are two words which can be applied to her and which she deserves from her conduct—vulgar and brazen. There is a term which the French apply to women who indulge in intimacies with the opposite sex which are not criminal—*demi-vierge*. As I have watched the familiarities which pass between the modern young girl and young man in their dancing and in their daily life, this phrase has often come to my mind.

Katharine S. Alvord, Dean of Women
at De Pauw University (Greencastle, Ind.),



HE SEES A "MORAL SAG."

"Freedom is not balanced by self-control," believes President Gage of Coe College, who finds that we are still in the midst of the reaction that followed the idealism of the War years.

observes that: "The younger part of society, like the older, is feeling its way out of the tumble-down fabric which the war precipitated." Another dean, who desires to be nameless, takes a similar view:

Ever since the strain of war ceased late in 1918, young America has been showing less and less of the restraint which we consider an evidence of modesty, good breed-

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ing, and sound character. So far as I can see, conditions are no better than a year ago. Skirts are even shorter, waists as low as ever, more bobbed hair than ever, girls more shameless in their flirtations, boys more eager, bold and sensual in their looks and manners. I believe that Zane Grey's new story, "The Day of the Beast," now appearing in the *Country Gentleman*, is a timely description of this condition. Let us hope that he will find a solution. I know none.

Irma G. Voigt, dean of women at Ohio University, while "not fearful for the individual," as "in every generation the great individual will stand forth," nevertheless admits:

I do fear for a certain subtle carelessness that is slowly creeping into human relationships and sex relationships, that seems to be gnawing at the very foundations of the home.

We have glorified personal liberties and individual rights to the point that they are beginning to spell lack of self-control and total irresponsibility in the matters of moral obligation to society. A favorite expression of youth to-day is "Public Opinion be hanged"—but it never has been hanged and never will be.

Writing from St. Stephen's College at Annandale-on-Hudson, Dean Orville F. Davidson expresses the opinion that, "The heart of the matter, the painful truth, seems to be, not that standards have changed, but that there are no standards at all. Every subject is debatable and is debated, especially by the inexperienced, from the length of skirts to free love, from highly questionable modes of dancing to more than questionable political experiments involving the destinies of whole peoples. Such debate may be stimulating, but the final appeal is usually not to any serious standards of morals or intellect, but to the caprice of selfish predilection of the individual." This general point of view also appeals to Rockwell D. Hunt, dean of the Graduate School of the University of Southern California. He observes:

Young girls, in particular, in their dress and their attitude toward young men, are often without the restraints or modest reserve that were formerly deemed indispensable. There has arisen in these latter days a pernicious near-cult of what might be called flapperolatry, fanned into fierce flame by a cheap type of journalism, which amounts often to a challenge to young men to exceed all speed limits of immodesty and to the girls themselves to throw to the winds all time-honored niceties of maidenly reserve.

Undoubtedly the reign of jazz (*jazzocracy*) and degraded forms of the dance, heightened by the disease that may be called *movieitis*, is in part responsible for certain deplorable tendencies now quite pronounced. So complete is the revelation by virtue of our every-day practises that, as a writer remarks, "Neither sex has any illusions left regarding the other."

Dean Theo. P. Campbell of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute deplures "a great deal

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of general looseness in our younger generation, both of ideas and of conduct," and Dean Burris, of the College for Teachers at the University of Cincinnati, writes:

I do not think that conditions have changed for the better within the past year, and if I may venture an opinion as to the cause of the present situation, I would say that human conduct, in general, and that of the youth, in particular, is at last finding its fullest expression of that vicious doctrine of undisciplined spontaneity which has found its best exemplar in Rousseau. As a consequence, it seems to me that an increasing number of people, young and old, are carrying this doctrine to its logical conclusion by trying to find how to become happy without becoming moral.

The remedy obviously lies in the direction pointed out by John Locke, where he states: "The great principle and foundation of all virtue and worth is placed in this: that a man is able to deny himself his own desires, cross his own inclinations, and purely follow what reason directs as best, tho' the appetite lean the other way." In a word, it is the realization of reason without which a community of obedience is preferable to a community of will.

"I perceive no change in the situation during the past year," writes Sylvanus Morris, dean of the Law Department at the University of Georgia. The causes of the present state of affairs in his opinion, are:

1. Immodest dressing and improper familiarity with men on the part of young women.
2. Insubordination of young men, who are no longer required to respect parental authority.

The remedy lies primarily with the mothers of young women. The reasons why it is not applied are given as:

1. The desire for attention to their daughters overrules conscience.
2. Preoccupation in other affairs cause neglect of family duty.
3. The church having lost her authority, the family having neglected its duty, moral training is relegated to the public school.

A new reason is discovered by Dean James S. Stevens from the University of Maine, who writes that, "Having been heartily opposed to the extension of suffrage to women, I am perhaps overinclined to hold this responsible for the immodest and immoral behavior which is characterizing the present era. It seems to be necessary for women to imitate the vices of man in order to prove actual equality with him." This opinion is held also by Warren A. Seavey, dean of the College of Law at the University of Nebraska. "Political and economic liberty," he points out, "has come to women, who, retaining their sex instincts and not yet knowing how to use their freedom, are apt to claim the virtues and ape the vices of men." Another college dean (whose name is withheld) turns back to a consideration of the relation between manners and morals. He writes:

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Society can protect its morals only by manners, and none, I think, can deny that manners are changing. In my opinion the change facilitates a breaking down of morals. I speak only of conditions as I personally am wrestling with them, not in any wide sociological sense.

I find that the younger part of society, the average young men and women, hoot at the conventionalities which have been recognized in the past as their best safeguard. The bars are down, or fast coming down, and the youngsters snap their fingers at social dangers, hotly denying, in cases I could cite, the very existence of such to the well-informed.

It is difficult to generalize because of outstanding exceptions, but I am constrained to say that I find the younger part of society of the same relative status, more than formerly, disposed to condone business obliquity, to disregard ordinary courtesy, to proclaim itself superior to social dangers, not amenable to constituted authority, self-confident to the extent of walking straight into the fiery furnace along with the Hebrew children, in full expectation of coming through unhurt.

I recently witnessed the brazen (or shall I say mistaken?) defiance of a young man as he challenged "the world" to show wherein he had jeopardized the fair name of a very young girl whom he had kept in the deep and secret places of the forest many hours, not for the sport of hunting, fishing or the like, but for love-making pure and simple.

Yes, without the restraining hand, along with the sympathetic understanding which we owe them, I anticipate a more or less pronounced relapse into a period of moral laxity within the next few years. We know of conditions in former times which only Blue Laws, enforced with the Puritan's sledge-hammer, could overcome. To-day other remedies suggest themselves, and certainly of an opposite sort, which already are actively at work, but we should move faster with them.

By way of broadening the scope of its inquiry, as well as of investigating conditions among still younger young folks, *THE DIGEST* invited response from school superintendents and the principals of high schools. To a certain degree, college students are recruited from the so-called "highbrow" element. That element contributes less extensively to the rank and file in the high school. There we have the sons and daughters of average Americans. How are those sons and daughters conducting themselves?

"I am a young man, a war veteran," writes George Buckley, principal of the Cooper (Tex.) high school, "and can hardly be accused of judging by the arbitrary standards of age; yet when I view the products our high schools are turning out as future citizens, I am appalled.

"It seems to be a negative immorality, a general indifference to any high ideals or ambitions. A hedonistic philosophy seems to prevail, and the remarks I constantly hear are: 'Have a good time while you are alive, for you are a long time dead,' and 'Enjoy yourself while you are young,' etc."

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Mr. T. W. Conway, superintendent of schools at Tularosa, N. M., finds similarly that "Society, the younger part of it, is undergoing a great change in manners and morals. The shameless dancing and the brief dressing of young girls have struck our Western country very hard. Bobbed hair and bobbed skirts are becoming almost unendurable in our small Western towns." "In my opinion," writes G. W. Ingersoll, superintendent of schools at Constantino, Mich.: "The revolution in morals and manners is still for the degradation of young people rather than for their betterment. I can see no place in society for bobbed hair, dresses that do not cover the knee-caps, and like contraptions. I think it high time to call a halt in regard to dress and mannerisms." Turning to the changed political basis on which the modern woman finds herself, Paul B. Keeton, head of the School of Education at the Southwestern Teachers' College, writes:

During the late war and since there has been a general "shaking up" of customs, manners, etc., and along with political changes involving women there is growing a different consciousness in regard to the sexes. There appears to me to be a general indecently, dance shockingly, go traveling around the country at night in chaperonless automobiles, encourage the "snuggle puppy" in his "petting," smoke cigars, drink whatever they can find to drink, swear like pirates, and talk freely of things they ought to leave unmentioned, our correspondents ask, "Where are their mothers?" If boys are as wild, where are their fathers? All through the mass of replies from horrified onlookers runs this censure of the American home. The great need, we are told, is a reassertion of parental authority. Indeed, it is probable that this view would be indorsed even by the correspondent who asserts that in his own community the youngsters have been helped along the road to righteousness by the attentions they are receiving from the Ku Klux Klan.

However, not by any means all the testimony brought out by THE DIGEST's questionnaire is alarming. Next week we shall consider the replies from observers who look upon the ways of the rising generation with reserved, or even enthusiastic, approval.

In the meantime, members of the Parents League of Brooklyn have decided not only that conditions are capable of improvement but also that a certain set of edicts may help in the process. League members, reports the *New York Times*, will see that several blue laws for the young are enforced in their own families, and will try to extend the movement to other Brooklyn homes. The rules which are to be applied to flappers run as follows:

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1. Hours for evening parties are limited from 8:30 to 12. It's curfew after midnight.
2. Parties are to be held only on Friday and Saturday nights.
3. Simple, refined clothes are to be worn at all times.
4. Chaperones must be present at all parties.
5. Chaperones will accompany the girls home.
6. Censorship over the plays and movies to be attended.
7. Improper dancing forbidden.
8. No refreshments served after dances.
9. Not more than one party to be attended on the same evening.

Here are the rules which the smaller boys and girls, those of primary school age, must observe:

1. Entertain in small groups.
2. Serve very simple refreshments at parties.
3. All games must be supervised.
4. Use simple favors and no prizes.
5. Parties must end at 8:30 P. M.
6. Simple afternoon dress is to be worn on all occasions.

7. No movies or theaters, except those recommended by the school or investigated and approved by parents.

"We can do nothing with the older boys and girls, whose customs have become more or less established," said Mrs. Otto Affeld of 113 Willow Street, Brooklyn, yesterday. Mrs. Affeld is president of the league. Girls over 18 years of age are left to whatever rules their parents prescribe.

change in attitude and in action regarding the position of woman which largely explains many questions that arise to-day of this nature. Since woman is taking her place aside man politically there seems to be a disposition to place her aside man in other ways and society is coming to expect the same from woman and to demand the same and no more from man. I believe, therefore, that there is a general change taking place both in morals and manners that will mark the lives of the next generation in a very noticeable way. I do not think the changes all bad, but I fear that the net result will not be wholesome.

"There was a time, our fathers tell us," observes Daly Thompson, principal of the Collierville School (Collierville, Tenn.), "when the Southern lad of fifteen to twenty years of age would never meet an acquaintance of the opposite sex but that he would politely bow and tip his hat. To-day he greets the young girl of his acquaintance with a familiar slap on the back or shoulder—even on the street does he do this. When seated in a room, he never rises when a lady enters, unless perhaps she be an invited guest, upon her arrival.

"His remarks about girls as they pass his particular loafing-corner uptown are always bordering on the vulgar. He has no wholesome remarks to make.

"The lad is not wholly to blame for this. The manners of the girls too often warrant such comments. The two to six inches of bare skin between the top of her 'own roll' and the bottom of her skirt are conducive

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to such remarks; so are the transparent skirts.

"Just two days ago I passed four girls, whom I judged to be about sixteen years old, standing in the middle of the pavement on Main Street in one of our larger Southern cities. As I passed I heard one of them say: 'I just told him I did not give a "God dam."' If such language is ever proper, it surely is not proper for street usage." J. I. Riddle, high-school principal, at Attalla, Ala., gives this testimony:

The rank and file of small town and city high-school young people are amusement mad. I do not believe that conditions are appreciably worse than they were last year, but I see no improvement. Between midnight dances, careless dress and its suggestions, and sex-motivated moving pictures, high-school training in manners and culture has a poor chance.

In view of all this complaint, one asks, not unnaturally, "What are we going to do about it?" The questionnaire has brought in a curiously uniform array of answers. While many of them emphasize the need for a revival of old-fashioned religious instruction and many more demand a reform of the movies and of current fiction, an overwhelming majority declare that improvement can come only from influences brought to bear in the home. If girls dress

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millions of readers, may be of great value to parents, educators, young people, and others directly interested in the rising generation. Perhaps the crux of the question may be stated in this way:

Is society, especially the younger part of it, undergoing a revolution in morals, in manners, or in both?

In so broad and diverse a land as America, conditions, of course, are not everywhere the same, and the replies fall naturally into two classes, those revealing conditions that are deplorable, and those which show that the young folks are returning to normalcy. Taking the worst news first, then, we give this week the reports that are "pitched in the key of blue." Next week we shall present the "other side."

From the religious press, as represented by its editors, comes a well-nigh unanimous cry of alarm. "Things are getting worse from day to day," writes W. B. Screws, editor of the *Pilgrim Messenger*. "This is proven, not only by the dress, but also by the talk of the young people—especially the girls." "My candid opinion," says C. B. Riddle, editor of the *Christian Sun*, official organ of the Southern Christian Convention, "is that there has been very little change in these things during the past year. Public criticism has seemed to have the effect of jokes about Henry Ford's cars—the more the talk the greater the advertising." As concerns women's dress, Mr. Riddle declares: "It's easy enough for the public to say that only the evil mind criticizes the manner of dress of to-day. But this will not do. There are certain elements of human nature that go unchanged and they respond to-day just as they have always responded. Too many of our young women are improperly clad, and just so long as these conditions prevail, the average masculine mind will have less and less respect for the feminine." Equally condemnatory is J. A. Lapham, editor of the *Baptist Record* (Des Moines), who tells us that a leading Frenchman in Christian life in France, a strong Protestant, who had traveled widely, was shocked with the manner of dress he saw at commencement at one of our leading universities in the East. "He said it was the bad women that drest that way in France, not their good women."

That we are "passing through a period of depression in morals and good manners" is the opinion of D. S. Kennedy, who edits the *Presbyterian* in Philadelphia, and Samuel Byrne, editor of the *Pittsburgh Observer* (Catholic), writes:

"In my opinion, there has been a change for the worse during the past year in the conditions you mention—feminine dress, dancing, manners, and general moral standards, especially as these affect young people. The causes are the lack of an adequate sense of responsibility in the parents or guardians of girls, a decline in personal religion, a failure to realize the serious ethical consequences of immodesty in girls' dress, a dulling of moral susceptibilities, an inability to grasp the significance of the higher

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things in human life, and, last, but not least, the absence of sufficient courage and determination to resist the dictates of what is known as Fashion when these are opposed to decency."

"There is such a thing as Bolshevism in the moral and spiritual spheres," declares George W. Sandt, D.D., editor of the *Lutheran*; and, in his opinion:

"We are suffering from its effects at the present time. A spirit of libertinism is abroad among our youth. There is little or no respect for parents and superiors in many of our homes and schools and churches. There is an ominous absence of reverence for things sacred, of noble ambition and earnest moral purpose, and a bold and brazen defiance of decency and modesty in dress and speech and conduct. Women paint and powder and drink and smoke, and become an easy prey to a certain class of well-groomed and well-fed high-livers, whose chief business is 'to pluck the blush of innocence from off the cheek of maidenhood and put a blister there.' Pleasure—madness and love of luxury have become epidemic, and the vast multitude seem to have banished all noble idealism and usefulness, and refuse to take life seriously, save under compulsion of some misfortune. Any one whose optimism can make him blind to all this and much more is welcome to it. I do not have that kind of optimism, and have little respect for certain preachers who apologize for the sins of the age when they are called of God to condemn them."

R. E. Hough, editor of *The Mississippi Visitor* (Presbyterian), takes an equally pessimistic view. He writes that—

"There has been a very decided break in the moral levee, and it now looks as if the waves of immorality and indecency of a little while ago have become such a torrent the public has about decided there is no use attempting to repair the breach, and get back to the old channel of pre-war standards of living and conduct. The only change, therefore, that I can see is that which has occurred in the public attitude rather than a return to higher ideals and behavior. The general public has become more tolerant. Much that shocked the finer sensibilities a few months ago are now regarded as quite the thing to do. And this is why much less is being said about conditions."

W. P. Throgmorton, editor of *The Illinois Baptist*, sees a revolution going on in both morals and manners. Morals, he says, are looser than formerly. "In my opinion," says O. V. Woosley, field secretary of the Western North Carolina Conference Sunday School Board, "conditions relative to behavior of young people are worse than formerly. More boys and young men are smoking cigarets with prevailing results. More girls and young women are giving themselves to the frivolous rather than substantial modes of behavior. I am inclined to think that youthful morals are being broken down." H. C. Wayman

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and A. T. Robertson, editors of *The Review and Expositor* (Southern Baptist), also find evidences of moral degeneration. They write:

"There is a great deal of frank talk among them that in many cases smacks of boldness. One hears it said that the girls are actually tempting the boys more than the boys do the girls, by their dress and their conversation. Not all the boys and girls are bad, but evil is more open and defiant of public opinion and restraint than was once the case. The situation causes grave concern on the part of all who have the ideals of purity and home life and the stability of our American civilization."

James M. Gray, editor of the *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, declares that in both morals and manners society "is undergoing not a revolution, but a devolution. That is to say, I am not so impressed by its suddenness or totalness as by its steady, uninterrupted degeneration." Taking a very similar view, a bishop of the Episcopal Church observes:

"As one reads history, it would appear that the younger generation always seems to be in peril in the estimation of the generation just passing off the stage. It is one of the characteristics of the older people to glorify the manners, customs and habits of the time when *they* were young.

"But it does seem as if at this period, because of extraordinary happenings, there is a letting down of convention, a change of angle, an alteration of standards—all this seems to us older people to be unfortunate, and to presage disaster. But let us remember that we older people have 'made a mess of it,' and recent history reflects no credit on those who might now be expected to be pioneers of everything that is noble and fine in human life. The young people come on the stage keen, observant, full of life and activity, without much respect for the generation which has brought things into such a sad condition. They propose to have their own way, go their own gait, and make things *different*.

"But the history of Republics in the past does not give much comfort, for they have always gone in cycles of 1. *Enthusiasm*; 2. *Prosperity*; 3. *Corruption*; and 4. *Dissolution*. Are there not signs, not a few in this Republic, that it is well on its way toward the crisis of that cycle?"

To all this it is easy to reply that the editors of religious newspapers are outside the world they condemn so harshly. But condemnation as harsh, if not harsher, comes from within that very world. Certainly the editors of college newspapers and magazines know whereof they speak, and the following excerpts from replies to our questionnaire may be considered representative. Thus the editor of a college magazine in one of the country's largest, most representative women's colleges, Alice F. Parker, editor of *The Smith College Monthly*, finds that:

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last year's moralists with a new and refreshing fad, are just the same sort of specimens that they were when first brought to light. They continue to dance and drink, and smoke and pet and conduct themselves in precisely the ungodly manner of a year ago. The reason that at present there is not so much discussion of the degenerating youth is simply that the public is tired of hearing about it.

The subject has served its turn for the entertainment of the scandal-worshippers, and will now be gradually dropt. All the talk, all the publicity in worthy periodicals, such as your own, all the efforts of the confirmed reformers have not changed the facts in the least. The only effect has been to add zest to the performance of sin. It is really most amusing to play at being wicked when there is a delightfully scandalized audience to appreciate one's efforts.

What seems particularly odd to me is the conviction that the "wildness" of modern youth is something startling and new. Flappers were common and petting parties expected occurrences long before their piquant names brought them notoriety. And so they will continue to be, in spite of the storm of shocked surprize which is just passing over. The reason is that boys and girls are naturally curious—about themselves, and especially about each other. They satisfy curiosity by experiment. All people have the desire to do what the world says they should not, simply because they should not. Youth satisfies this desire. It always has and always will, in privacy or in the open, depending upon how the light of publicity turns. This past year has happened to be an open season. We have enjoyed it immensely. And the poor, shocked middle-aged of the world have made themselves so absurd!

Sorry not to be able to predict a great and immediate moral reform, since that is what the world would like to think its interest has produced. Tell it so, if you like, but it will not be the truth.

"Every day," says Mr. Buel Boyd, editor of the *Kentucky Law Journal* (University of Kentucky), agreeing with

Miss Parker's views that this is an "open season" in morals, "we see our friends and companions, both male and female, doing things and taking liberties that would



**"THERE ARE NO
STANDARDS."**

The painful truth, in the belief of Dean Orville F. Davidson of St. Stephens College, is "not that standards have changed, but that there are no longer any standards at all."



**"A CHANGE FOR THE
WORSE."**

During the past year, in the opinion of Samuel Byrne, editor of *The Pittsburgh Observer* (Catholic), conditions have become more serious as affects general moral standards among young people.

horrified them even to have thought of a few years ago." The war, he believes, caused "a warping of the moral fiber" by giving the younger generation "a spirit of freedom, self-reliance and self-esteem bordering close on recklessness." He observes: "That spirit did not die with the war, but outliving it is still a part of each of us. Parental control and supervision are old-fashioned hobbles, having no sympathy from us young folk. Frankly speaking, the war gave us young folk the swell-head. It taught us to believe that we are the strength and safety of the world." Taking the same general view and presenting it in greater detail, R. M. Budd, managing editor of the *Punch Bowl* (University of Pennsylvania), says:

There can be no doubt but that young people do look upon life in general with a greatly revolutionized view. The pride of the girl of to-day is in the fact that she is ignorant of nothing. No doubt the extremes to which we have gone are to some extent due to the moral laxity resulting from a war period, but in my estimation we shall never return to those conditions existent prior to that time.

To the girl of to-day petting parties, cigaret-smoking, and in many cases drinking, are accepted as ordinary parts of existence. The girl who will not permit a kiss from any fellow who pleases her these days is practically non-existent. As regards cigaret-smoking, I know that 70-80 per cent. of the girls I am acquainted with indulge—girls of good families whose mothers may not feel inclined to accept this high percentage, but they are not with their daughters at dances, parties, etc., where smoking by the girls is most common.

The modern girl is an extremist. She dresses in the lightest and most flimsy of fabrics. Her dancing is often of the most passionate nature, and I believe the modern dance has done much to break down standards of morals.

But do not permit me to convey the idea that the girls are entirely



"SELF-IGNORANCE."

This is at the basis of most of the troubles now credited to the younger generation, believes President A. McKenzie Meldrun, of Spokane University.



A CRITIC OF DRESS.

"Too many of our young women are improperly clad," declares C. B. Riddle, the editor of *The Christian Sun*, official organ of the Southern Christian Convention.

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to blame. The fellow of to-day, in most cases, will not go out with a girl for any period of time unless she permits him to caress her. Such is accepted as the sequel of most every date.

If checked for a moment by last year's agitation, the riotous torrent of immorality sweeps onward more relentless than ever. And the appalling menace of this downward trend is the callousness of the popular mind to it. The sexual is flaunted everywhere, and through constant view of the suggestive, and salacious, the public conscience, seared or paralyzed, takes it now as a matter of course. The very reticence of the press and platform to moral conditions must be looked upon as ominous, rather than as indicative of improvement. We don't know where we're going, and we don't care!

Unless from its imperiled sleep over the pit of moral chaos, American civilization shall suddenly awake, it sleeps the sleep of death!

Jazz is a little more reckless, the movies a little more obscene, the dances a little more daring, and manners a little more loose than last year. More girls are smoking cigarets and are aspiring to be vamps and flappers.

In certain quarters it may be argued that students' testimony, tho based upon a close-up view of conditions, may be somewhat extreme in its conclusions, as youth now and then lacks poise of judgment. But college presidents are not noted for any such deficiency, and at best a few of them accept the students' opinion practically at face value, having tested it, doubtless, by observations of their own. Thus B. H. Kroeze, president of Jamestown College (Jamestown, N. D.), declares, in a way that suggests comparisons with the more pessimistic student editors:

It is shocking to the sensibilities of men the way women love to display themselves in modern dress. The thought of the body is excluding appreciation of the values of the soul, and our modern youth will grow up with a minimum concern for the welfare of the soul and with a maximum and abnormal development of bodily interests. It would seem that mothers are neglectful to an extreme degree of the modesty and virtuous grace of their daughters, which, after all, are the virtues which true men love and admire. Men are forced to look up to avoid unseemly display by the modern woman, and how she can avoid realizing this fact is a marvel in femininity.

Ignorance of their own natures, believes President A. Mackenzie Meldrun of Spokane University, is at the bottom of much of the trouble. He writes:

Our young people do not know themselves, nor have they learned the sacred purpose of their being. One of the most alarming facts in the world to-day is man's ignorance of self. The home, the school, the press, the platform and the pulpit must unite in combating this noisome pestilence that is spreading a sable cloud of shame, disease and death over every community in the land; sowing seeds of moral, mental, physical and spiritual degeneracy, to be reaped by our children in a harvest of national decay.

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We are so anxious to teach the young of the nation the various branches of academic knowledge, rules of etiquette, and forms of good society, that plain talks to the boys and girls seem to be divorced from the family curriculum. This is a deplorable mistake, against which I inveigh and offer my most solemn protest; for I verily believe it is more important for our sons to know themselves, than to know Plato and Virgil: and it is more imperatively necessary for our daughters to know themselves than to know the histories of ancient Greece and Rome.

"Manners are superficially better and fundamentally worse," remarks President Harry Morehouse Gage of Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Ia. "There has been a pronounced moral sag. Things that are done now are in marked contrast to the vaulting moral enthusiasm of three or four years ago. Generally speaking, there is not enough restraint. Freedom is not balanced



HE BLAMES SUFFRAGE.

"It seems to be necessary for women to imitate the vices of men," writes Dean James S. Stevens, of the University of Maine, "in order to prove actual equality with them."

by self-control. One is reminded that 'It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.'" Another college president suggests that perhaps all this is "a reaction from the idealism of 1914-18." Another calls it a "perverted interpretation of the principle of self-determination."

Among the college deans, who are especially close to student activities, we find a number who hold views of the same order as those just quoted. Clyde Brooks, dean of the University of Alabama, tells us, in a way that compares with the most pessimistic student editors, college presidents, and religious editors:

There is an appalling lack of industry, thrift, hard study, and old-fashioned honesty of purpose among college students. The present-day college student knows nothing of spending several hours every day in actual hard work on his studies.